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JESSIE WILLCOX SMITH
(1863-1935)
"Checkers"
Oil & Pastel on Board, 24 x 16
Signed, Upper Left

Published in Scribner's magazine, December, 1902 as a Special Christmas Pictorial entitled "A Mother's Days" in full color, page 690

HARVEY T. DUNN (1884-1952)
"Prairie Homesteaders Coming Home"
Oil on Canvas, 25 x 37
Signed & Dated, 1909

W. HERBERT DUNTON
(1878-1936)
"Badger Hole" ("The Spill")
Oil on Canvas, 28 x 20
Signed, Lower Right & Dated, 1906

Published in Cosmopolitan magazine, March 1908, page 52, story illustration for "The Lecture in Lady Gay" by Alfred Henry Lewis. Exhibited National Cowboy Hall of Fame Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

Reproduced as a half-page full color illustration in Julie Schimmel's University of Texas Press book The Art and Life of W. Herbert Dunton, 1878-1936, *on page 54 for the chapter "The Wild and Romantic West."*

FRANK E. SCHOONOVER
(1877-1972)
"Return of Ancient Otter"
Oil on Canvas, 36 x 27
Signed & Dated, Lower Right, 1917

Published in American Boy magazine, July 1918 "The White Black Foot" by James Willard Schultz. Exhibited Brandywine River Museum and New Britain Museum

Reproduced as a full page illustration in Courtland Schoonover's 1976 Watson-Guptill book Frank Schoonover - Illustrator of the North American Frontier, *on page 115*

DEAN CORNWELL (1892-1960)
"Captain Blood Inspecting The Treasure Chest Jewels"
Oil on Canvas, 26 x 52
Signed, Lower Right & Dated, 1930

Published in Cosmopolitan magazine, July 1930 as a 2-page story illustration for "Ransom - Captain Blood" by Rafael Sabatini. Reproduced in Dean Cornwell - Dean of Illustrators *by Patricia Broder, 1978 Watson-Guptill (also reprinted by Collector's Press, 2001.)*

NORMAN ROCKWELL
(1894-1978)
"Al Smith was Fellowman to Every Man"
Oil on Canvas, 28 x 22
Signed, Lower Right, Circa 1945

Alfred E. Smith & The Children of the World. *Published as a unique fund raising poster for The Alfred E. Smith Memorial Hospital Fund, Empire State Building, New York, 1945. Reproduced in* Norman Rockwell - A Definitive Catalogue *by Laurie Norton Moffatt, Volume 2, 1986, page 1018, Figure #P157.*

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(1870-1966)
"Autumn Brook"
Oil on Board, 11 x 9
Signed on verso,
Vose Galleries label,
Maxfield Parrish Jr. hand-written notes. Circa 1948.

Published as a calendar by Brown & Bigelow, St. Paul MN. Reproduced as opening plate for Maxfield Parrish chapter in America's Great Illustrators *by Susan E. Meyer pg. 114 Harry N. Abrams, Inc. N.Y. 1978*

COLES PHILLIPS (1880-1927)
Watercolor on Board, 26 x 26 Signed, Lower Left.

Ad for Hosiery Co., published in 1922 & 1923 in Life, Redbook, Literary Digest, Good Housekeeping, Pictorial Review *and* Women's Home Companion *magazines. Reproduced in:* All American Girl—The Art of Coles Phillips *by Michael Schau, 1975, Watson-Guptill, New York, pg. 109;* Famous American Illustrators *by Arpi Ermoyan, Society of Illustrators, New York, 1997, pg. 185,* The Great American Pin-Up *by Charles G. Martignette & Louis K. Meisel, Taschen, 1996, pg. 30*

HOWARD CHANDLER CHRISTY
(1873-1952)
"After the Storm"
Oil on Canvas, 40 x 30
Signed, Lower Left & Dated, 1936

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Author of *Pin-Up/The Edward Runci Collection* published worldwide by Collector's Press, Portland, Oregon, January 1997. ISBN 1-888054-15-8

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Wladyslaw Theodor Benda
(1873-1948)

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Illustration

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From the Editor...

I would like to take this space to offer a special thanks to the Illustration House and Fred Taraba for supplying so much of the incredible material you will see in our feature on W.T. Benda. Without their help, this article would not have been possible. I would also like to thank Susan Schomburg for her assistance and guidance in the production of the article on her father, Alex, and for allowing us to reproduce so many previously unpublished images from their archives.

The generosity of our many contributors, individual collectors, galleries, and fans, has been essential to the success of every issue of *Illustration*. Every author, every advertiser, and every subscriber adds something to this magazine. Your support is greatly appreciated; without you, none of it would be possible.

On another note, some people have been very confused about *Illustration '05*. This is a completely new and different magazine focused on contemporary illustrators. It is not an annual, it is a quarterly magazine just like this one. The title will change to reflect each passing year. I hope that you will ask for it at your local bookstore or newsstand, and that you will check out the website at www.illo.us.

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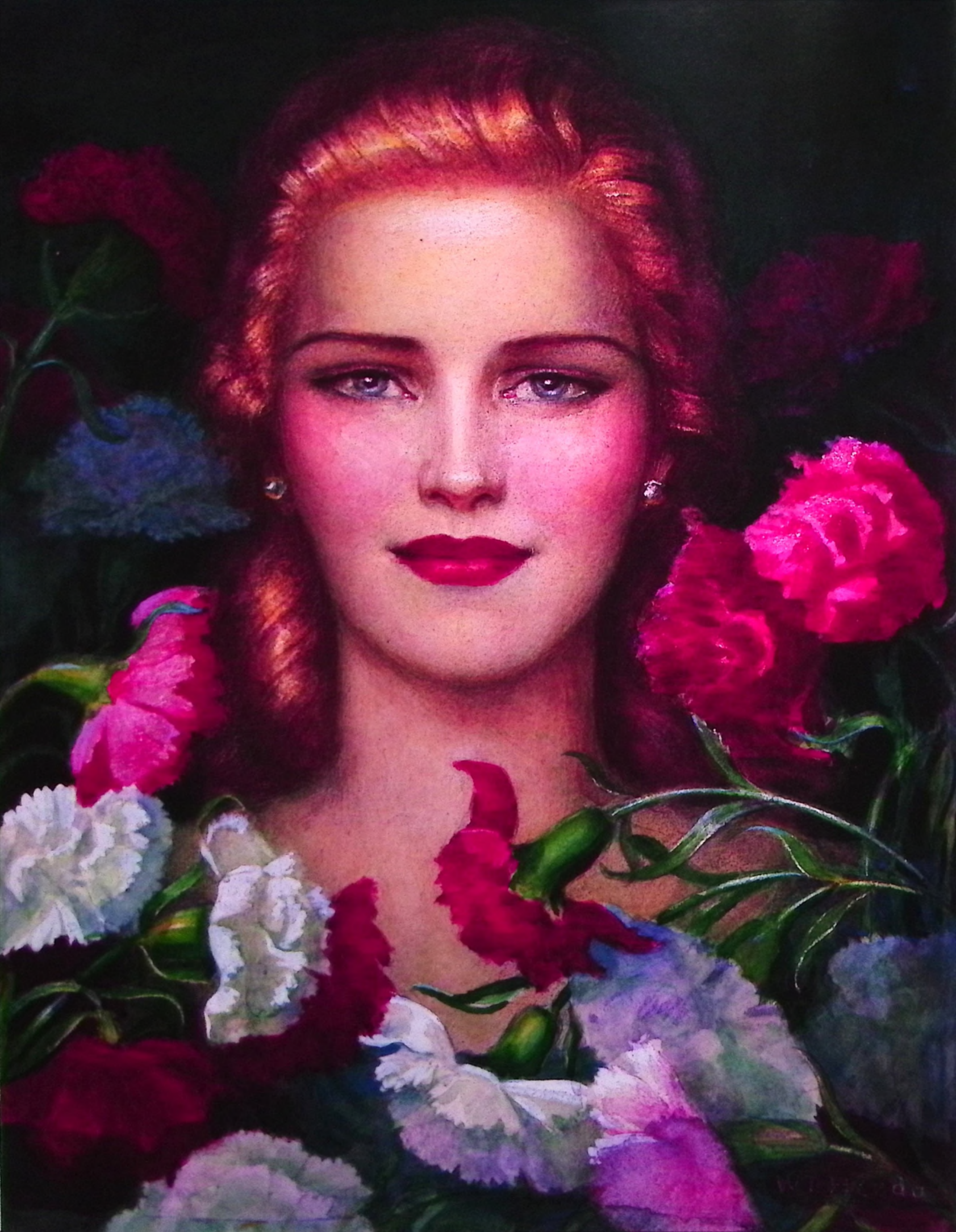


The Man Behind the Masks

W. T. Benda

by Mark B. Pohlad

The work of W. T. Benda (1873-1948) was produced during the "Golden Era" of American Illustration, which ran from approximately 1880 to 1940. Yet today he is virtually unknown, unlike a number of his more famous contemporaries—Charles M. Russell, Charles Dana Gibson, James Montgomery Flagg, or N.C. Wyeth. It is likely that Benda has not received the attention he deserves because his work was extremely varied, and it is difficult to pin an easy label on his prodigious output. For some observers he was known as a Western artist; by theater historians as a mask maker; and by vintage poster collectors for as a poster artist. Literary types would point to the myriad novels he illustrated, and they would argue that his single most important commission was for the eight little drawings he made for novelist Willa Cather's *My Ántonia* (Houghton Mifflin, 1918). Altogether, Benda was a painter, muralist, lithographer, set designer, maskmaker, woodcarver, author, and playwright. To date, the Illustration House's excellent catalog on him (issue #30, published in 1993) is the best treatment. Incidentally, this Benda is not the "G. K. Benda" who created the famous "Mistinguett" poster of a windswept cabaret chanteuse whose dog is airborne on his leash (Philippe G. Dreyfus, Paris, c. 1920s).

Wladyslaw Theodor Benda, c. 1940s

Unlike the illustrators mentioned earlier, Wladyslaw Theodor Benda was not native to this country. He was born in Pozna, Poland into a very creative family, a family in which everyone seemed to be involved in music and theater in some way. Pozna was a large city at that time, strategically situated in west-central Poland on the lines that ran from Paris to Moscow. Famed for its Renaissance and Baroque architecture, it was also a musical center, and home to what would become the National Museum, where we can imagine the teenage Benda admiring age-old Slavic artworks.

Wladyslaw's father was a successful pianist and composer. Because of his sensitivity to creative expression, he recognized his son's gift for drawing early on and enrolled him in drawing lessons by age five. Near the end of his life, Benda furnished a glimpse into his childhood, about which there is scant information:

"Since my early boyhood days, to the annoyance of everyone around me, I have always tinkered, whittled, or glued paper into shapes of toys, puppets, and diminutive towns. This persistent habit of making things, with the subsequent help of technological and art studies, was bound to develop some aptitude... while growing up in a family of actors, where all things connected with the artificialities of the stage were the daily topics of discussion."

Young Wladyslaw first studied at the Pozna School of Technology, concentrating on engineering-related subjects. When he was nine, his father moved the family to a different city to protect his children from the rabid Germanization that pervaded Polish schools at the time. As a young adult, Benda enrolled at the Kraków Academy of Fine Arts studying under

◄ Original calendar illustration. Charcoal and watercolor, 18 x 13.75

Three early drawings, c. 1890s

Polish academic painters with names little known today: Izydor Jablonski, Wladyslaw Luszczkiewicz, and Florian Cynk. When in the 1890s he was accepted into Vienna's prestigious School of Fine Arts, his family moved to be with him and with his sister, who was also in Vienna as a voice student. It is obvious from his art that his training was solid and traditional, for many of his female figures recall those by Old Masters. The sweetness of the heads make one think of Raphael and Botticelli; the long necks and delicate hand gestures can be traced to Mannerist and Baroque art. Considering his background, interests, and travel, Benda must have seen countless masterworks in the museums of Vienna, Berlin, Kraków, and, later, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and New York. In the summer of 1898 young Benda, now 25, his two younger sisters, and his father—already sick from what would be his final illness—left for America.

Poland itself was now in a state of crisis. It was divided piecemeal among the great European powers. The city of Pozna was controlled by Prussia, whereas Kraków, to the south, was Austrian. The late 19th Century was a bloody period for Poland as uprisings against its Russian, Austrian, and Prussian overlords were brutally put down. A million Poles emigrated to escape the oppression; Benda himself said that "the mania of emigration is like a contagious disease." They landed mainly, like his family, in North America.

They made the long trek to California to be with his aunt, Helena Modjeska (1844-1909), an extremely famous Polish actress. The 19th Century's greatest Shakespearian actress, and probably Poland's greatest actress ever, Modjeska was in the same rank as her contemporaries—Ellen Terry, Lilly Langtry, and Sarah Bernhardt. With her husband and a circle of friends, Modjeska founded a pioneering agricultural community in Anaheim, California. Today, her Stanford White-designed home, "Arden," in Orange County, is a National Historic Landmark. Looking forward to Benda's own popularity, Modjeska enjoyed a very wide, very grass-roots kind of fame. Not one to shun the common people for big city audiences, she traveled across America bringing high-minded entertainment to town and country alike.

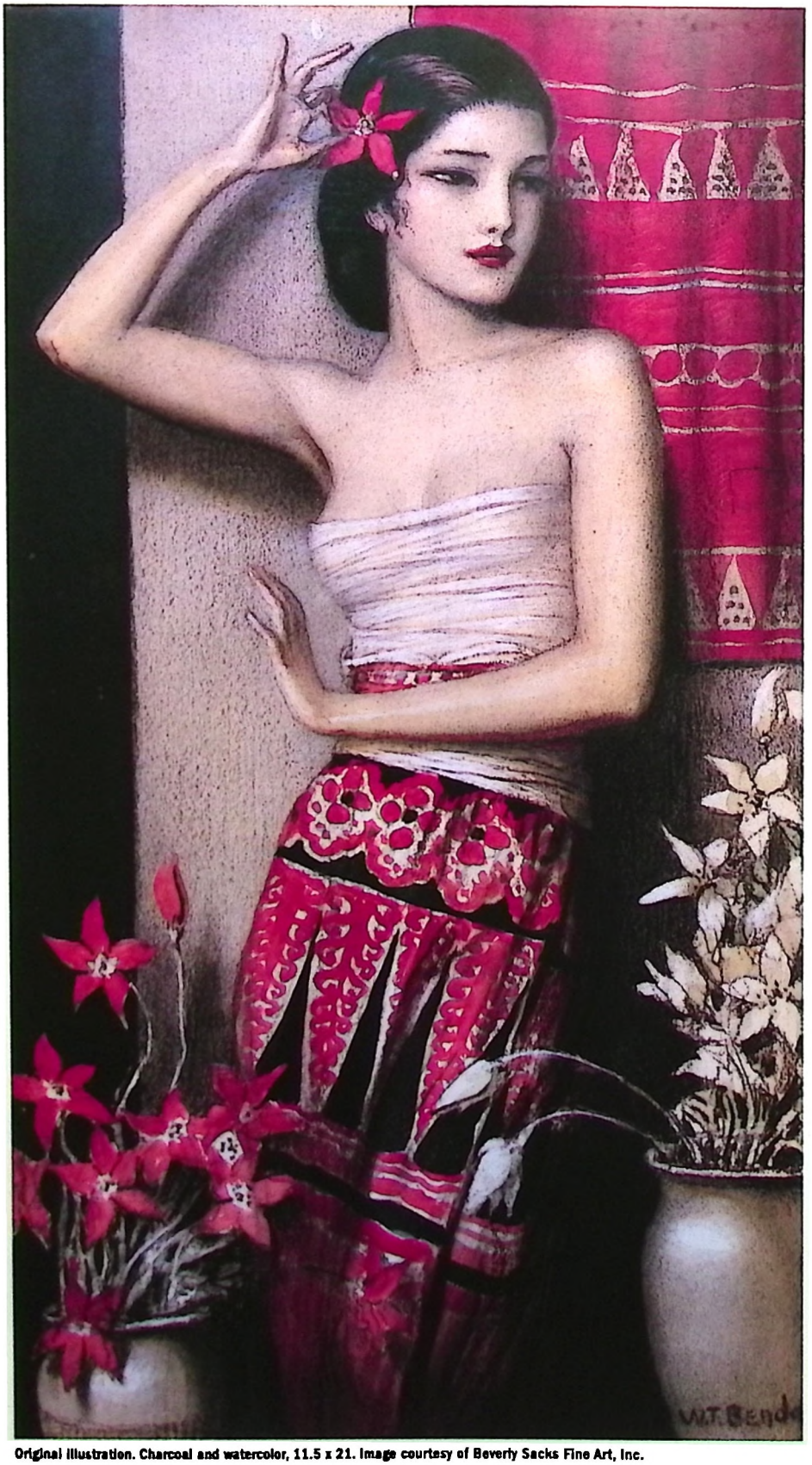
That first year at Arden must have been a startling change of scenery for the immigrant family. Fresh from sophisticated Vienna, California seemed the end of the world, and in fact, in 1898, it was. Benda's younger sister later recalled that it was "still a pretty wild place." Getting water was a perennial problem, mountain lions roamed about, and the public roads were not entirely safe. Different ethnicities abounded, and these must have fascinated Benda: Native Americans, Mexicans, and even a Japanese cook employed by Modjeska.

Original illustration. Charcoal and watercolor, 15.25 x 19

After the Benda's arrival, Modjeska helped her nephew's career by finding him work in theatrical productions. He made the sets, costumes, and props for a Los Angeles production of Shakespeare's *Cleopatra* (1898-99) in which his aunt had the starring role. So powerful was his grounding in the theater that it colored every dimension of Benda's creative interests.

For now, though, his great ambition was to be an artist,

Original cover illustration for *Collier's*, c. 1920s. Charcoal and watercolor, 18.75 x 23



Original illustration. Charcoal and watercolor, 11.5 x 21. Image courtesy of Beverly Sacks Fine Art, Inc.

Original calendar illustration. Charcoal, pastel and watercolor, 14 x 17.5

Original story illustration. Charcoal and pastel, 36 x 23

and he is known to have taken some classes in San Francisco. Within a few months, Benda left for the East Coast to continue his art studies. And by the time he reached New York in 1905, he had been studying art for years, and in many of the world's cultural centers.

Like so many young avant-gardists, Benda had been influenced by the suave, decadent art of the Viennese artists and illustrators. Indeed, there is something of the Art Nouveau in the linear emphasis of his art and something of Symbolism in the dangerously exotic women that he drew over and over again. The long-haired beauty in Mucha's *Job* poster comes to mind, as do the indomitable patrician beauties of Gustav Klimt. But Benda was his own artist, absorbing influences in order to make them his own. And, like all great artists, he made pictures incessantly. His aunt later recalled how astounding it was to watch him work: "His activity is simply stupendous, and his imagination so great that I saw him composing four large-sized charcoal sketches in one day, with wonderful ease, whistling or humming some Polish airs."

In New York he attended the Art Students League and the William Merritt Chase School (later simply called The New York School of Art) where he studied under Robert Henri (1865-1929) and Edward Penfield (1866-1925). Henri must have made a huge impression on the young Benda. He himself hailed from an Eastern European immigrant family who had changed their surname to "Cozad" because his father had killed a man. In the years Benda was studying with him, Henri was becoming notorious as the leader of the "Ash Can School," newspaper-illustrators-turned-painters who treated tough urban subjects in crudely realistic ways. These artists—George Bellows, John Sloan, George Luks, Everett Shinn, and others—would have appreciated Benda's gritty, charcoal realism. In fact, it would not be entirely wrong to regard the young Pole as an Ash Can artist or, more precisely, as an Ash Can *illustrator*. After all, Benda was part of the Henri circle of students. His paintings hung with theirs in the notorious National Academy exhibition in New York (1907), which led to the Ashcan artists' history-making show at the Macbeth Gallery the following year.

His art education complete, Benda sought commercial work. He was gifted and prolific, and public success soon came his way. He joined the Society of Illustrators in 1907, the Architectural League in 1916, and became a naturalized American in 1911. He won prizes at world's fairs and exhibited at American museums. Despite these successes, and despite his education in painting, Benda would make his living as a draftsman. The crayon and pencil would always be his favored tools. Even his magazine covers began as colored drawings.

As an enthusiastic immigrant in the American West, he had been exposed to the cowboy culture that was just then becoming mythologized. Arriving at just the right moment, Benda watched an entire culture grow up around the cowboy legend. Books and magazines provided readers with an endless supply of Western stories and pictures. Owen Wister's *The Virginian* (1902) was a bestseller; Buffalo Bill Cody and Wyatt Earp were living legends. At his aunt's California estate, Benda found

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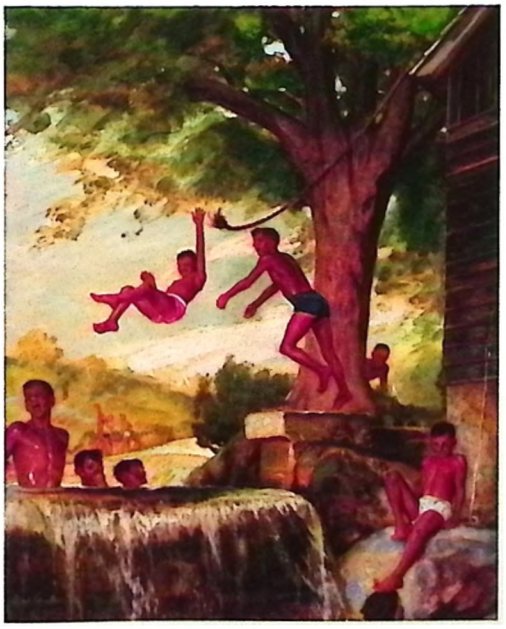
ORIGINAL PAINTINGS DEPICTING MID-20TH CENTURY LIFE IN AMERICA

JOHN CLYMER (1907–1989) *Glacier National Park*. Oil on board, 30 x 28. Signed lower left. Published July 30, 1960, front cover, *The Saturday Evening Post*. **Reproduced:** *Famous American Illustrators* by Arpi Ermoyan, pg. 112, Quantium Publishing Ltd., London, 1999. **Provenance:** Ex-Collection, New Britain Museum of American Art, New Britain, Connecticut. Private Collection of Alan M. Goffman (1941-1997), Blue Bell, Pennsylvania.

AMOS SEWELL (1901–1983) *Playing Cowboys & Indians*. Oil on board, 34 x 26. Signed lower left. Published March 11,1950, front cover, *The Saturday Evening Post*. **Provenance:** Private collection.

SUMMERTIME IN AMERICA 1940 - 1960



MEAD SCHAEFFER (1898–1980) *The Swimming Hole*. Oil on board, 22 x 17. Signed lower left. Published June 25, 1949, front cover, *The Saturday Evening Post*. **Provenance:** Private collection of Alan M. Goffman (1941-1997), Blue Bell, Pennsylvania.

STEVAN DOHANOS (1907–1994) *Florida Oceanfront Trailer Park /John & Lizzie Wilson, Boston, Massachusetts*. Oil on masonite, 36 x 30. Signed lower left. Published February 2, 1952, front cover, *The Saturday Evening Post*. **Reproduced:** *American Realist-Stevan Dohanos* by Stevan Dohanos, North Light Publishers, Westport, Connecticut,1980, pg. 36.

NOTE: All four of the above paintings and images were published and reproduced in the book *Covers of the Saturday Evening Post* by Jan Cohn, Viking Penguin Books, New York,1995.

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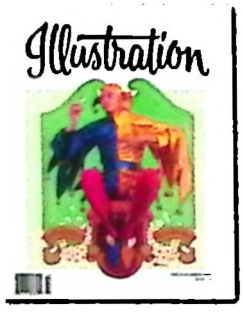

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***Ladies Home Journal*, January 1921**

himself right in the midst of this rough-and-tumble world. He drew on these memories as he made illustrations for Edgar Beecher Bronson's novel, *Cowboy Life on the Western Plains* (New York, 1910).

Once in New York, Benda began drawing for magazines such as *Century, Saturday Evening Post, Scribner's, American, Ladies' Home Journal,* and *Cosmopolitan.* As his career unfolded, these would be the publications that gave him a livelihood, and a career. Benda has been called *McClure's* "war-horse" artist because he was counted on to create high-level work quickly and competently. But it was with *Collier's* that Benda had the longest association. He produced stunning magazine covers for them and a broad range of publications over the next 30 years. Very few other illustrators of his generation—perhaps only James M. Flagg and W. H. D. Koerner—worked so consistently for so many magazines over such a long period of time. His covers reached just about every address in America.

Still, very little is known about the man himself, but an article from 1922 offered this account:

"In personal appearance, Wladyslaw T. Benda is unassuming. Small in stature, blond, with a small, blond mustache, and slightly Slavic cast of features, he dresses in plain business clothes. No velvet jacket, smock or flowing tie, or other dressy accoutrements. His manner is mild, gentle, a bit shy. His voice is soft and has a hesitating note. He is not a fluent speaker in English, though he speaks glibly in a number of foreign tongues."

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"Stepping High" Gil Elvgren Original Artwork

W. T. Benda

In the period when Benda was making a name for himself creating portraits of confidently handsome females, American women were beginning to assert themselves culturally and politically. They would win the right to vote in 1920, and the women's press—magazines and fiction concerning fashion, household hints, and romance—was then reaching its peak. Female youth culture was redefining itself in this decade, too, as the brash "flapper" commanded attention. Many of the publications Benda illustrated were geared to a female readership and many of the viewers who admired the "Benda woman"—languid and self-assured—were women themselves.

At this moment in American visual culture, the stylized female face was everywhere: in advertising, photography, film, and in the popular press, and it was used for all kinds of reasons. The type of exotic woman that Benda drew for so many covers was a type we now associate with the '20s and '30s. He expressed the fantasy of those decades in the dreamy beauty of a female face. But he was not just following a mold. Benda's women were not the comely belles of Christy or Gibson. They were more mysterious, more explicitly foreign-looking. To heighten their exoticism, he often drew them in costumes and with props that suggested Europe or the Middle East. A group of drawings reproduced in a *Century* magazine spread, "New-Made Americans: A Few Types of Foreign Women Sketched, in New York, from the Life" (October 1913), demonstrated Benda's gift for capturing national characteristics and costume. Full-page and partial-page images represent Benda's idea of women from many different countries, "Zobéida, from Syria," being one example. He once said that rendering different ethnic types was his favorite thing to draw.

Immigrant readers, particularly those "New-Made Americans" from Eastern Europe, must have recognized the kindred features in his female portraits. Immigration in this country was then at its high water mark, and Benda's works flattered and glamorized the new female populations. Those women who could not identify with the stereotypical American beauties might have felt a greater sense of identity with Benda's wide-featured women. His art might have helped them feel like they were being represented in the mainstream press, and it may have helped increase readership numbers, too. In any case, it is no exaggeration to say that his vision of female beauty defined the ideal of feminine beauty in the '20s and '30s. He was the great draftsman of the Art Deco woman's portrait.

Around 1914 Benda turned to more sculptural pursuits. He began making beautiful and realistic theater masks, fabricated mostly of paper-maché over wire or bamboo armatures. His reputation for these became such that some refer to him as the premiere mask maker of the early 20th Century. They first appeared in the production of *Greenwich Village Follies* (1920) at New York's Coffee House, written specifically to feature them. They even found their way into plays written by Noel Coward and Eugene O'Neill, the two most important playwrights of the period. Benda himself

"Laïla, from Mesopotamia." Illustration for *Century* magazine, 1913

"Zobéida, from Syria." Illustration for *Century* magazine, 1913

Printer's proof of an illustration for *Every Week*, November 19, 1917

Printer's proof of an illustration, c. 1920s

Original illustration. Watercolor, c. 1920s

Magazine illustration featuring two masks, c. 1920s

Dancer Margaret Severn models a number of Benda masks, 1920

WORLD PICTURES
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 3, 1920.
An interesting revival of an ancient art—the masks, made by W. T. Benda, the illustrator, which Margaret Severn uses in her Greenwich Village Follies dances.

Newspaper clipping featuring Benda and his masks, October 3, 1920

even wrote a number of one-act plays which utilized them. These "Benda masks," as they came to be known, were eventually used on stages all over the world and were photographed for various magazines. Hollywood took notice of them as well. His "Katharine Hepburn" mask, a dead-on likeness of the actress in her role of "Jade" in the movie *Dragon Seed* (1944) went on tour as a promotional device. And one cannot help noticing that Benda's 1919 "Sea Monster" mask bears a striking likeness to the monster's costume in the Hollywood movie sensation, *Creature from the Black Lagoon* (1954).

In effect, Benda's masks are sculptures of the elegant, cat-eyed, eastern European Venuses that appear throughout his illustration, and they can look eerily life-like. Some were made to imitate women's faces, others are bizarre, others caricatured, a few genuinely frightening. They draw inspiration from international traditions such as Japanese No masks, Balinese masks, and from the Polish masks Benda remembered seeing in his childhood. But they mostly derive from his own style of drawing the female face. Regardless of the media he worked in, that was his great subject.

Katherine Hepburn mask, 1944

Woman wearing streamlined head-dress. 9 x 6.25 x 21.25

Silly head. 10 x 6.5 x 6

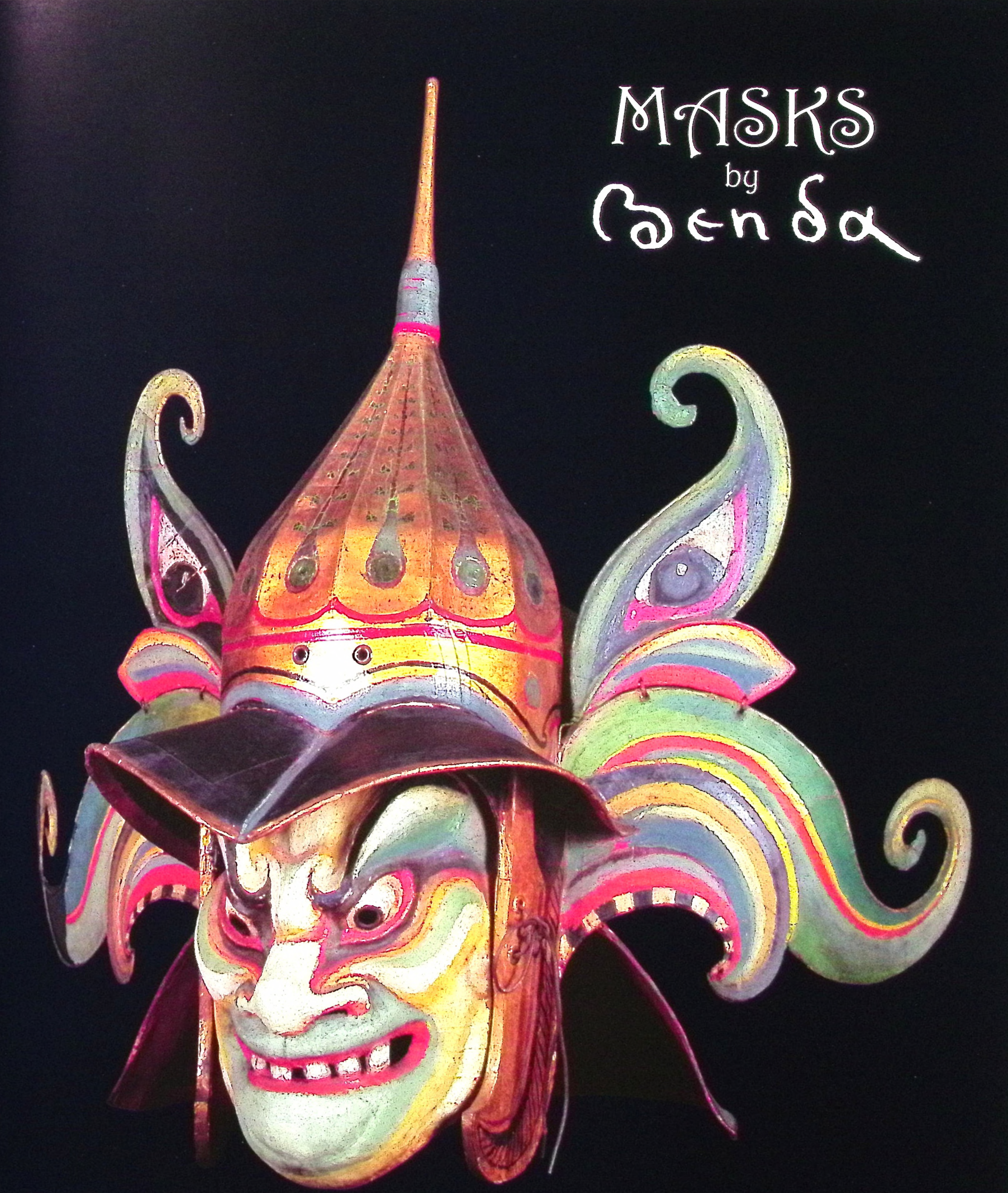
Woman wearing red bonnet with curl. 8.75 x 8 x 7.25

Helenka, collection of Lawrence D. Wood. 8.75 x 8 x 7.25

Sea Monster, 1919. 17 x 13 x 21.5

Merle Oberon, 9 x 8.5 x 6

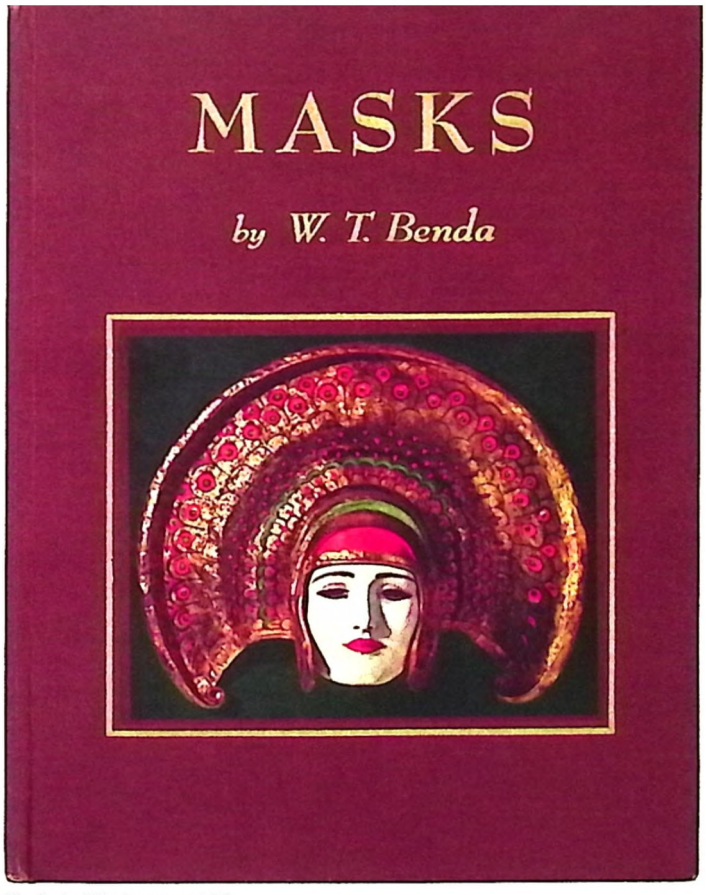
MASKS by Benda



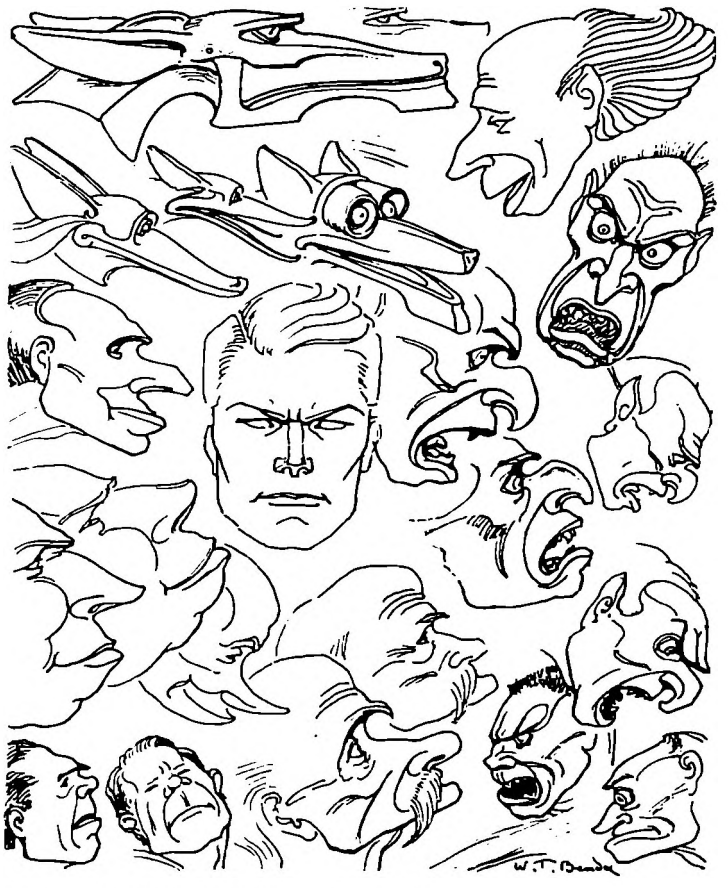
Chinese Demon

Drawing by Benda from *Masks*, page 8

Original illustration for *Life*, July 13, 1922. Charcoal and watercolor, 15.25 x 17



Masks by W.T. Benda, 1944



Conceptual sketches by Benda from *Masks*, page 24

In the latter part of his career, mask-making absorbed more and more of his time. Four years before his death, he produced a handsome, profusely illustrated book, *Masks* (Watson-Guptill, 1944). It is a fascinating read—part personal memoir, part how-to guide for making "false faces," as Benda sometimes called them, and part scholarly examination of worldwide mask-making traditions. The "Golden Peacock" mask, featured on the cover of *Masks* and in several interior illustrations, was his most famous example.

Like much of his art, it is explicitly indebted to Gustav Klimt and to the Secessionist art he had seen as a student in Vienna. By all accounts, Benda's masks dazzled everyone who saw them. The tastemaker Frank Crowninshield, who wrote the introduction to *Masks*, says that he first saw them in 1920 "at a vaulted studio overlooking the dim reaches of Gramercy Park."

Now at the peak of his career, in 1920, Benda boasted a very prestigious address: 1 Gramercy Park. The Manhattan neighborhood was then, and still is, a genteel neighborhood of brownstones, artists' studios, wrought iron fences, and towering trees. The exclusive and venerable National Arts Club is there, as is the birthplace of Teddy Roosevelt. Benda's own studio was a spectacular place, filled with antiques, mostly Asian, and was covered in decorative panels that he had carved and painted himself. Its exotic atmosphere recalled William Merritt Chase's studio and the era when artists established fantastic studios like these to enhance their inspiration and to impress visitors. It is easy to imagine him dreaming up a picture there or, more down-to-earth, making the trip up to Midtown to meet with book and magazine editors.

Although he was a passionate aesthete, Benda was also a high-spirited, fun-loving man. He once admitted that he only created things that were "fun." His masks are serious outgrowths of his background in theater, but they also occasioned many good times. In his book he speaks about being stopped by police for carrying what looked like a severed head under his arm. He also liked to ring his neighbor's door wearing outrageous masks. He even once asked the busy manager of a meat-packing company if he could buy some calf's eyelashes for his masks!

Before movies came to dominate popular entertainment, illustrated novels brought stories to life. Just as N. C. Wyeth's images determined readers' mental pictures for a whole body of classic literature (*Captains Courageous*, *Treasure Island*, etc.), Benda did the same for a collection of popular fiction.

His illustrations for Gene Stratton-Porter's books, particularly *A Girl of the Limberlost* (1909) and *Freckles* (1916), hold a special place today in the hearts of Stratton-Porter admirers.

It is in his book illustration that Benda reveals his talent for imagining scenes and giving pictorial form to plot situations. The wide range of his subjects and handling is best seen here. He was equally adept at character types, landscape, and city scenes, as well as multi-figure compositions. And he was capable of expressing the extremely subtle psychology between the sexes, perfect for the awkward gender dynamics being acted out in his time. "Post Office," the frontispiece Benda drew for

JANUARY 1924 35 cents
Hearst's International
Beginning TONGUES OF FLAME
A Novel by Peter Clark Macfarlane
The WAR Against the KU KLUX KLAN
A New Sherlock Holmes Story

Hearst's International, January 1924

Hearst's International, May 1924

Jacob Riis' 1909 novel, *The Old Town*, shows two young adults shyly involved in a party game. They look down at the floor; the moment is tense with romantic feeling.

Benda could not have imagined that his eight small drawings for Willa Cather's novel, *My Ántonia* (Houghton Mifflin, 1918), would make literary history. They were not terribly ambitious, at least not by his own standards. They were totally unlike the suave charcoal and color magazine covers he was just starting to produce. Instead, they were similar to the smaller, black-and-white margin illustrations that often decorated popular novels of the time. Cather instructed Benda to make simple pen-and-ink drawings that resembled old woodcuts. She felt this would give the book the same rustic, Midwestern simplicity that she evokes in the novel. He might have been mystified, but, true professional that he was, he gave her exactly what she asked for.

Long before *My Ántonia,* Benda had illustrated a whole range of minor socially conscious fiction. The novels he illustrated bore titles like *Through the Mill; the Life of a Mill-Boy* (by A. L. Priddy, 1911) and *The Strike at Little Maggie* (by Victor Henderson, 1909). Two years after *My Ántonia,* Putnam Publishers, interested in capitalizing on this new "ethnic" fiction, commissioned him to make a frontispiece for Sofja Rygier-Nalkowska's *Koebiety [Women]: A Novel of Polish Life* (Putnam, 1920). Scholars wonder why Cather chose Benda for her novel, but in hindsight, he was the perfect illustrator for the project.

Book illustration from *My Ántonia* by Will Cather, 1918

Original cover illustration for *The Shrine Magazine*, May 1927. Watercolor and pastel, 9.5 x 14.25

Original story illustration. Charcoal and red watercolor on board, 38 x 25

They probably met while she was working at *McClure's*. It is thought that she chose him because of his Eastern European roots, like the characters in her book. In this way, her project would be more "authentic." According to scholar Jean Schwind, Houghton Mifflin's records indicate that Cather saw the project through against considerable opposition from her editor. She took an active interest in the design of all her books, and for *My Ántonia*, she exerted an almost obsessive control, functioning, for all intents and purposes, as its artistic director. She determined the style of the pictures and where they would appear in the text. Cather approved Benda's initial sketches and reserved the right to reject any of his pictures that did not suit her. She also told her publisher to place the images low enough on the page to give the effect of a vast open space under a noonday sun. She even went so far as to suggest printing the novel on yellowish paper to resemble the sunlight on the prairie. All this was done so that the entire product—the text, the images, the paper, and even her choice of Benda as her illustrator—would evoke the landscape and people of Nebraska. Sadly, when Cather specialists discuss the book today, Benda's contribution is almost totally ignored. But Cather was extraordinarily devoted to Benda's illustrations and often defended his work against her editors. In 1938, she got Houghton Mifflin to agree that all subsequent editions of the book would carry his pictures.

To Benda, already a seasoned professional, Cather was only one of many authors for which he produced imagery. Besides the muted, little black-and-whites he made for her, he was also capable of creating sensational imagery when it was called for. Sax Rohmer's blockbuster *Fu Manchu* stories, decades later, dictated this kind of treatment. *Collier's* published Rohmer's "The Mask of Fu Manchu" as a 12-part serial from May to July, 1932.

The cover of the May issue bore Benda's evocative and authoritative interpretation of the story. His composition of an Asian woman's face paired with the ominous mask—who better than Benda to illustrate a scary mask?—became the standard manner of illustrating *Fu Manchu* for the next 30 years. The wide appeal of Sax Rohmer's stories owe not a little to Benda's evocative imagery. And Benda's rendition of the mask itself was adopted by subsequent *Fu Manchu* illustrators and art directors. It was even used in the hit movie *The Mask of Fu Manchu* (1932; d. Charles Brabin), starring Boris Karloff. Interestingly, Benda himself came into close contact with the movie industry and more research on him will undoubtedly uncover even deeper connections. It is known that he himself had an acting role in at least one film. Benda is credited as the "Artist" character in the lost Louise Brooks movie, *American Venus* (1926; d. Frank Tuttle). He probably got the part because casting agents felt that he perfectly embodied the character of an artist and because he was talented enough to *play* an artist on account of his theater background.

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Rolf Armstrong, 1931
Green River Soda Girl
Pastel on Board

Henry Clive, 1921
Intoxication
Oil on Illustration Board

Rudolph Schabelitz, 1926
Egyptian Royalty Advertising Illustration,
Oil on Canvas

Earl Moran, 1949
Marilyn Monroe as Spanish Girl
Pastel on Board

Rolf Armstrong, 1935
The Hollywood Venus
Pastel on Board

Raphael Kirchner, 1900's
Original Art Nouveau Kirchner Girl
Watercolor and Charcoal

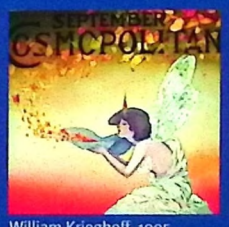
Adelaide Hiebel, 1932
Hiawatha's Honeymoon
Pastel on Stretched Canvas

Albert Beck Wenzell, 1897
Victorian Beauties w/ Angels
Watercolor on Board

Henry Clive, 1934
Moon of My Delight
Oil on Canvas

Henry Clive, 1910-1920
Zigfield Follies Showgirl
Oil on Canvas

Harrison Fisher, 1906
The Storyteller
Illustration, The Song of Hiawatha

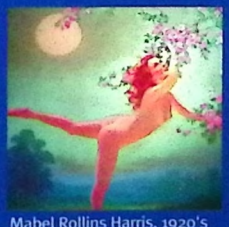


William Krieghoff, 1905
Cover for Cosmopolitan
Gouache on Illustration Board

Rolf Armstrong, 1919
"Tell Me Why" Sheet Music Cover
Pastel on Sandpaper

Henry Clive, 1937
American Weekly Cover
Pastel on Illustration Board

Rolf Armstrong, 1918 - 20
The Man Behind The Gun
Oil on Canvas



Mabel Rollins Harris, 1920's
Art Deco Nude & Cherry Tree
Pastel on Stretched Canvas

T.N.Thompson, 1952
Marilyn Monroe
Gouache on Illustration Board

Artist Unknown, 1920's
Indian Maiden in Canoe
Mixed Mediums

Henry Clive, 1948
Enchanters of Famous Men
Marie Mancini
Oil over Greytoned Photostat

Sam Cherry, September 1940's
Cover for Detective Tales Pulp
Oil on Stretched Canvas

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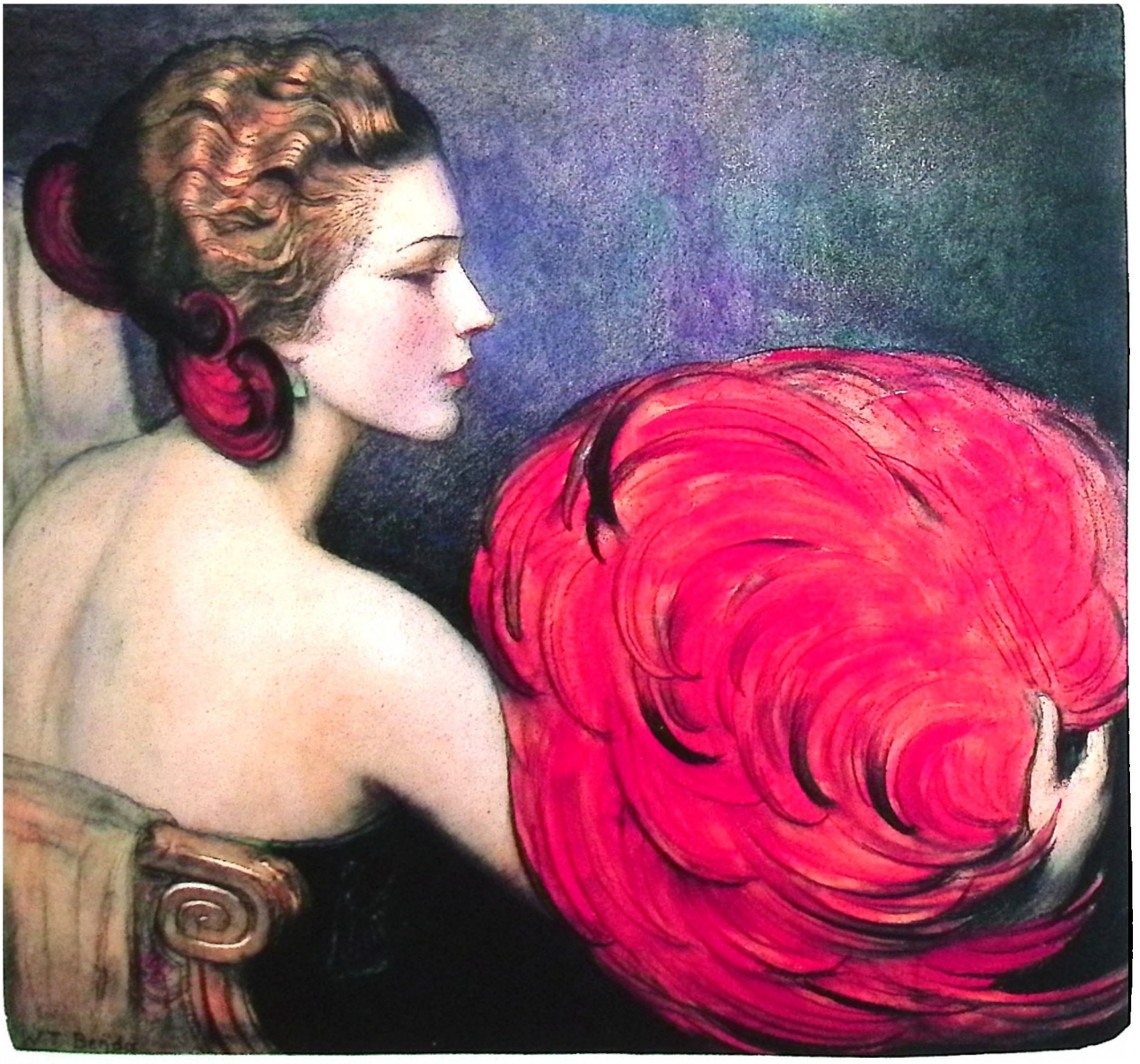
Original illustration. Charcoal and watercolor, 17.5 x 18.25

◄ Original illustration. Charcoal and watercolor, 18.5 x 21.25

Story Illustration, c. 1914

Original Illustration, c. 1920s. Charcoal and watercolor, 17.25 x 24.75



Original cover illustration for *Life*, January 8, 1923. Watercolor and charcoal, 20.5 x 19.75

Benda's Polish background is almost always in evidence in his art, and he was dedicated to his homeland up to the end of his life.

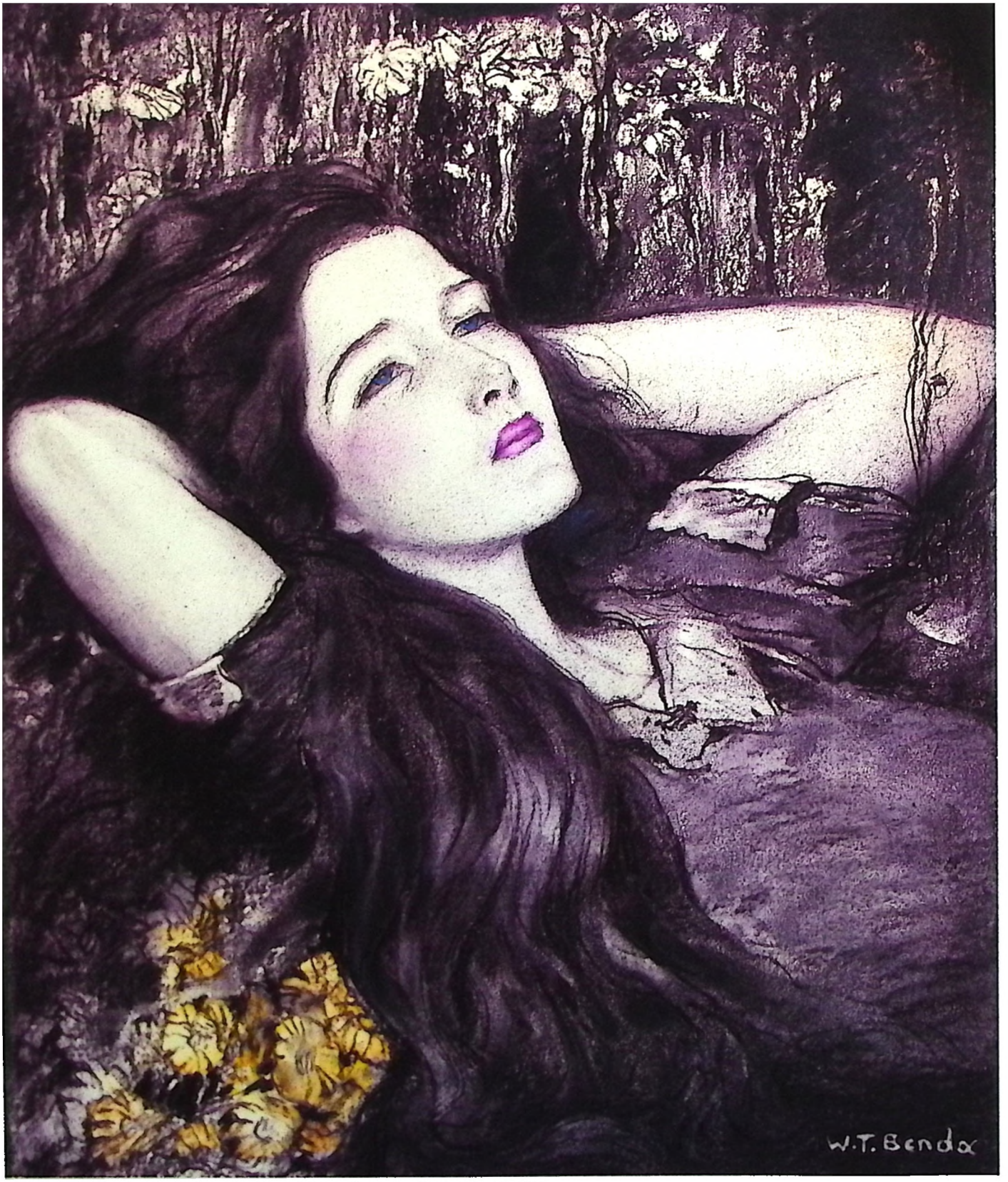
A Polish nationalist spirit was felt in this country in the teens and twenties as immigration numbers soared, and because of the celebrity of such figures as the composer Paderewski, the novelist Sienkiewicz, and the scientist Madame Curie. America experienced yet another wave of sympathy for Poland after Hitler's invasion at the beginning of World War II, and the subsequent bravery and victimization of its people. It was around this time that those Poles who had helped America in the Revolution—generals like Casimir Pulaski (1747-1779) and Tadeusz Kosciuszko (1746-1817)—began to be celebrated as well. Benda participated in this wave of sentiment for his own country and, recalling the Red Cross and recruiting posters he made for America during the First World War, now made posters promoting aid to Poland.

He is also known to have painted a gallery of military figures titled "Polish Heroes of the Revolutionary War" around 1943 and made several works for the Kosciuszko Foundation in New York, an organization dedicated to the preservation of Polish culture. He served as its informal artist-in-residence until his death.

By the time Benda reached his 70s, publishing had changed. Novels no longer carried pictures, and most magazines needed photographers, not illustrators. His stately Jazz Age beauties were out of style. They were replaced by the athletic pin-ups and pulpy nudes of the '40s and '50s. As his career

Original story illustration. Charcoal, 24 x 15.5

Original story illustration. Charcoal and pastel, 36.5 x 24



Original book illustration for *Daydreams* by George Putnam. Charcoal and watercolor, 16 x 19.5

drew to a close, he did less illustration and spent more time on his masks. Benda died on November 30th, 1948, at the age of 75. He had suffered a massive heart attack while waiting to give a demonstration of his masks in the auditorium of the Newark (New Jersey) Public School of Fine and Industrial Art. He passed away before a doctor could reach the scene. Considering his own deep affection for the theater, Benda himself might have appreciated his own final curtain.

W. T. Benda was an American success story, an enterprising immigrant whose immense talent was expressed across a half century of compelling imagery. Further research on his art and interests will undoubtedly raise his historical profile, something that is already underway. In the end, what we discover about Benda is what we already know about professional illustrators: how prolific and broadly talented they are, how passionate they are in their work, and, most importantly, how they reflect—how they *illustrate*—the time in which they lived.

—© 2005 by Mark B. Pohlad

Mark B. Pohlad, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor in the Department of Art and Art History at DePaul University in Chicago. He teaches and publishes on modern art, photo history, and the history of design. Contact him at mpohlad@depaul.edu.

Special thanks to The Illustration House, Inc., Fred Taraba, Beverly Sacks Gallery, and Lawrence D. Wood, who graciously provided transparencies of original art, masks, photographs, and tearsheets for use in this article.

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CAPTAIN HORATIO HORNBLOWER *N.C. Wyeth*
Charcoal sketch for the cover of the book: **Captain Horatio Hornblower; 20" x 28"; 1939**
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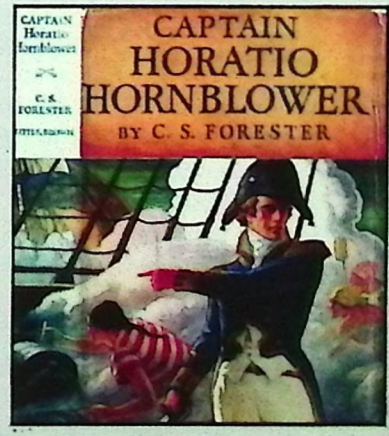

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W.T. Benda's Last Performance

by Colonel Charles Waterhouse

Benda poses with dancer Margaret Severn, c. 1920s

Benda in a mask, c. 1920s

Mr. Benda taught one day a week at the Newark School of Fine and Industrial Art in Newark, New Jersey. About ninety percent of the classes were made up of recently returned Veterans, under the G.I. Bill. Most of us were in our early twenties or younger, and just back from the Great Adventure. Mr. Benda was a very frail looking 75 years of age, and in our eyes he was ancient. His class was Basic Drawing—from plaster casts and the occasional model. When he corrected our drawings, his hands and body would shake with slight tremors—but when the quivering hands and charcoal touched the surface of the paper, it was a sure and decisive stroke, placed with precision and accuracy. Some smarter than others had so many corrections that they ended up with an original "Benda" drawing.

A few of us knew that he had been a famous illustrator with world-wide acclaim for over half a century, and we knew of his even more famous masks that he created over the years. The classes had filed into the large school auditorium to await a rare and unusual treat: Mr. Benda would perform and lecture to the student body. When Benda put on one of his masks, he disappeared—magically transformed into the spirit, shape, and gestures of the character. We waited expectantly for this visual treat. When the stage curtains finally parted, an instructor announced that Mr. Benda would be unable to perform. In fact, just as he was about to step into the spotlight, he had collapsed from a massive heart attack—falling and knocking over tables of his mask collections. He lay on the floor with a mask in his hand, and all of his mysterious, exotic and sinister creations sprawled over and around him.

It seemed to be a most fitting way to bring the curtain down on his spectacular career.

—© 2005 Colonel Charles Waterhouse

Colonel Charles Waterhouse, USMC (Ret) is an illustrator and fine artist. Visit his website at www.waterhousemuseum.com.

Benda in his studio with masks, *International Studio* magazine, January 1923

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"CAPTAIN BLOOD INSPECTING THE TREASURE CHEST OF JEWELS"
Oil on Canvas, 26 x 52, Signed & Dated 1930, Lower Right

Published in: Hearst's International–Cosmopolitan *magazine, July 1930 as a 2–page spread for "Ransom" a "Captain Blood" story by Rafael Sabatini.* ***Reproduced in:*** Dean Cornwell–Dean of Illustrators *by Patricia Broder, 1978, Watson-Guptill, N.Y. (full page 102) & in re-printed edition, 2001, Collector's Press.*

"PIRATES IN CONFRONTATION ON SHIP'S DECK"
Oil on Canvas, 24 x 40, Signed & Dated 1924, Lower Left
Inscribed: "To John Williams—Dean Cornwell" Lower Right

Published in: Hearst's International–Cosmopolitan *magazine, August 1925. "The Coconut Pearl" by Beatrice Grimshaw.*

"SEA CAPTAIN & THE QUEEN STANDING ON SHIP'S DECK"
Oil on Canvas, 29 x 46, Signed & Dated 1923, Lower Right

Published as: *the Wrap–Around Dust Jacket and Title Illustration for the hard cover novel book "Never The Twain Shall Meet" by Peter B. Kyne, 1923, (A Romance of California & The South Seas.) Also published in* Cosmopolitan *magazine in a serial for the same novel, July 1923–January 1924.* ***Reproduced in:*** Dean Cornwell–Dean of Illustrators *by Patricia Broder, 1978, Watson-Guptill, N.Y., (full page 37) & in re-printed edition, 2001, Collector's Press.*

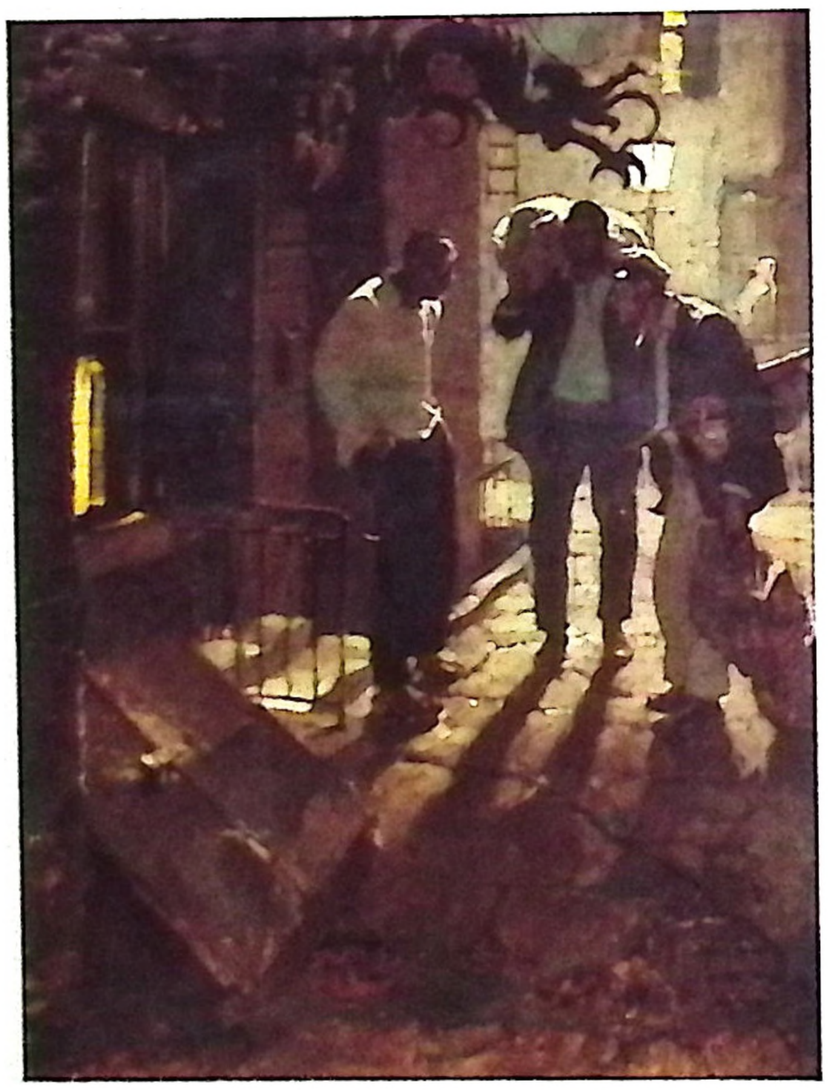
NOTE: The majority of the original paintings on these five pages were cherished by Dean Cornwell throughout his life and enjoyed by the artist and his friends for more than forty-five years in his legendary Sixty-Seventh Street studio and apartment in New York City from 1916 until his death in 1960. Many guests of international, social, and political prominence visited Mr. Cornwell's Manhattan studio and home during his half-century residency. Aside from Mr. Cornwell's stable of beautiful models, his other visitors included scores of movie stars and famous fellow artists from Charles Dana Gibson and James Montgomery Flagg to Harvey Dunn and Norman Rockwell. + Many of these early vintage paintings are considered to be amongst the most desirable and sought after of the artist's career. Others are famous images that have been immortalized by *Life* magazine and a number of other important 20th century cultural publications like: *The Saturday Evening Post, Cosmopolitan, Hearst's International, Red Book,* and *Good Housekeeping.* + Additional Dean Cornwell paintings are available for sale which are not shown on these five pages. Serious inquiries are invited. Included in the balance of this collection are more than two hundred Dean Cornwell original paintings, drawings, and preliminary renderings—the majority of which can be seen in the famous book, "Dean Cornwell - Dean of Illustrators" by Patricia Broder, 1978, Watson-Guptill, N.Y. Also featured in our inventory from the Dean Cornwell Studio Collection are the artist's world famous courtroom and news wire drawings from the Charles Lindbergh 1935 baby kidnapping trial. These were also published in the above referenced book.

CHARLES G. MARTIGNETTE

P.O. BOX 293, Hallandale Beach, Florida, 33008 USA Telephone: (954) 454-3474

Author of *The Great American Pin-Up* published worldwide by Benedikt Taschen Verlag, October 1996. ISBN 3-8228-8497-9
Author of *Gil Elvgren - All His Glamorous American Pin-Ups* published by Benedikt Taschen Verlag, December 1999. ISBN 3-8228-6611-3
Author of *Pin-Up /The Edward Runci Collection* published worldwide by Collector's Press, Portland, Oregon, January,1997. ISBN 1-888054-15-8

ORIGINAL PAINTINGS FROM THE DEAN



"CHINESE CHARLIE & TWO SAILORS MEETING IN ALLEY AT NIGHT"
Oil on Canvas, 36 x 28, Signed & Dated 1924, Lower Left

Published in: Cosmopolitan *magazine, January 1925. "A Man At The Crossroads" by Belle Burns Gromer. FRONTISPIECE (full page)* Dean Cornwell–Dean of Illustrators *by Patricia Broder, 1978, Watson-Guptill, N.Y. and in re-printed edition, 2001, Collector's Press.*

"DRAMATIC MEETING OF COUPLE DRESSED IN WHITE"
Oil on Canvas, 36 x 30, Signed & Dated 1923, Lower Right

Published in: Cosmopolitan *magazine's serial novel of "Never The Twain Shall Meet" by Peter B. Kyne, July 1923–January 1924. Caption: "What on earth! Doria," cried Pam. It was as if the sound of his voice stuck her like lightning.* ***Reproduced in:*** Dean Cornwell–Dean of Illustrators *by Patricia Broder, 1978, Watson-Guptill, N.Y. (full page 86) & in re-printed edition, 2001, Collector's Press.*

"THE BEAUTIFUL MID WIFE, THE BABY, AND THE BEAUTIFUL MOTHER"
Oil on Canvas, 40 x 30, Signed & Dated, Lower Right

Published in: Good Housekeeping *magazine, September, 1923. "The Perfect Marriage" by I. A. R. Wylie. Caption: River's end heard and did not believe. And then it had to believe. Mrs. Franklin was living in Tahiti—in a miner's cottage—nursing, organizing, running cheek by jowl with a vulgar demagogue. "She has forgotten her husband already," they said. Only Mrs. Elliot stood up for her. "No, no—it's her way of remembering," she pleaded.* ***Reproduced in:*** Dean Cornwell–Dean of Illustrators *by Patricia Broder, 1978, Watson-Guptill, N.Y. (full page 98) & in re-printed edition, 2001, Collector's Press.*

"BEAUTIFUL GIRL GIVING MAN DAGGER"
Oil on Canvas, 34 x 30, Signed & Dated 1921, Lower Left

Published in: Hearst's International *magazine, February, 1922. "The Red Shawl" by F. Britten Auston. Caption: "Go!" she ordered, all her soft seductiveness turned, in an instant, to fury. "Come to me again after you have killed Gregorio."* ***Reproduced in:*** Dean Cornwell–Dean of Illustrators *by Patricia Broder, 1978, Watson-Guptill, N.Y. (full page 45) & in re-printed edition, 2001, Collector's Press.* ***Note:*** *This painting and others in this presentation exemplify the close similarity and comparison often made between Dean Cornwell's early work and Harvey Dunn's influence and artistry.*

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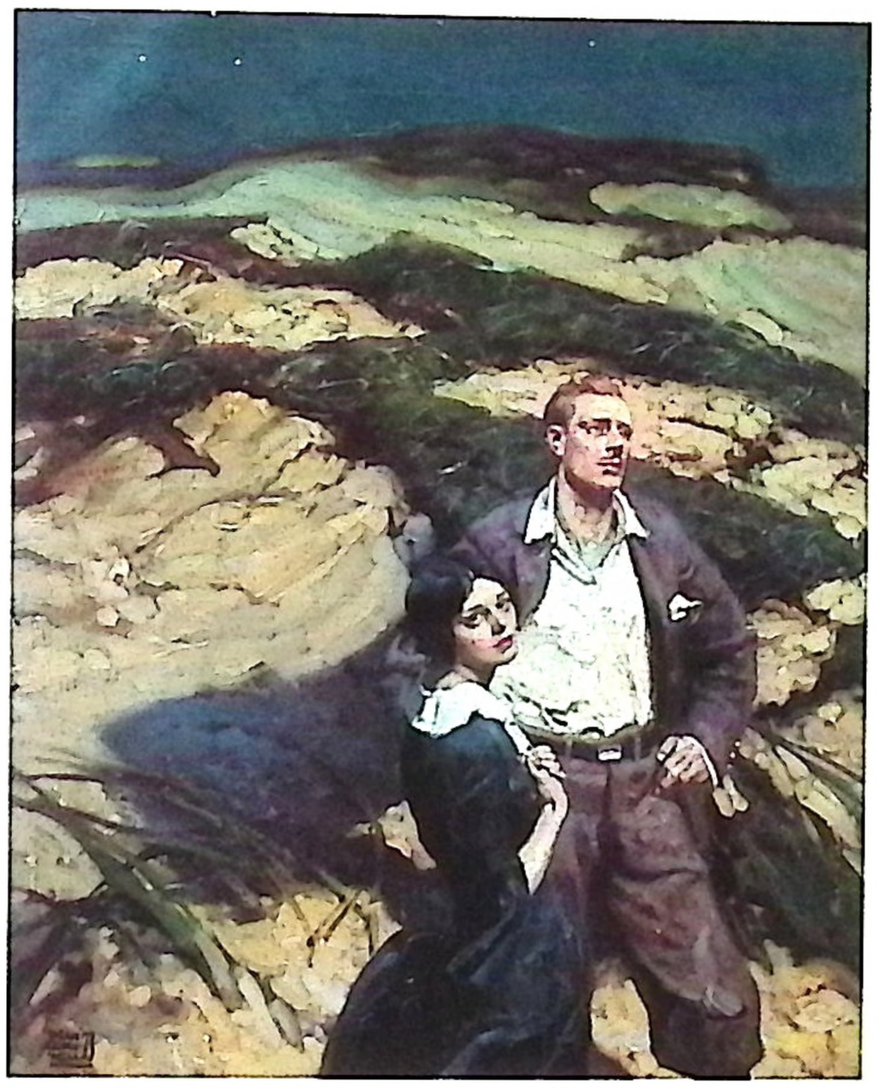

"ROMANTIC COUPLE UNDER STAR-FILLED SKY ON PRAIRIE LANDSCAPE"
Oil on Canvas, 36 x 30, Signed & Dated 1923, Lower Left

Published in: Good Housekeeping *magazine, March 1923. "Gold Hands" by Edith Barnard Delano. Caption: "Vasca—" She looked at him again. "You have given me all I know of splendor—of glory. Will you give me—life ?" Her smile was slow in coming, and when it came it was most radiantly tender. "That—would be so small a gift," she said.* ***Reproduced in:*** Dean Cornwell–Dean of Illustrators *by Patricia Broder, 1978, Watson-Guptill, N.Y. (full page 46) and in re-printed edition, 2001, Collector's Press.*

"COUPLE MEETING ON WINDING STAIRS AT NIGHT"
Oil on Canvas, 40 x 26, Signed & Dated 1924, Lower Left

Published in: Cosmopolitan *magazine, April, 1924. "The City of Temptation" by Sir Phillip Gibbs. Caption: "I'm starving," said Wanda, harshly to Youssouf Abdul Bey. "And I have an old grandfather who is ill. What will you give me out if charity, with nothing in return, neither smiles nor friendship nor what you call love."* ***Reproduced in:*** Dean Cornwell–Dean of Illustrators *by Patricia Broder, 1978, Watson-Guptill, N.Y. (full page 44) & in re-printed edition, 2001, Collector's Press.*

"BEAUTIFUL GIRL SPEAKING WITH OFFICERS ON SHIP'S DECK"
Oil on Canvas, 36 x 30, Signed & Dated 1923, Lower Left

Published in: Cosmopolitan *magazine, July 1923–January 1924. "Never The Twain Shall Meet," a novel by Peter B. Kyne. Caption: "Ah!" said Tamea. "You do not believe, then, that I am the Queen of Riva?" "No," retorted the health officer, "I do not. You're the Queen of Hearts."* ***Reproduced in:*** Dean Cornwell–Dean of Illustrators *by Patricia Broder, 1978, Watson-Guptill, N.Y. (full page 76) & in re-printed edition, 2001, Collector's Press.*

"BEAUTIFUL GIRL MEETING TWO HIKERS ON MOUNTAIN TOP"
Oil on Canvas, 34 x 30, Signed & Dated 1921, Lower Right

Published in: Harper's Bazaar, *April, 1921. "The Bridge" by Mildred Cram. Caption: "Just this side of Alta Cloche I overtook Finney and the woman who had gone out from England to go down into Italy with him."* ***Reproduced in:*** Dean Cornwell–Dean of Illustrators *by Patricia Broder, 1978, Watson-Guptill, N.Y. (full page 43) & in re-printed edition, 2001, Collector's Press.*

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Author of *The Great American Pin-Up* published worldwide by Benedikt Taschen Verlag, October 1996. ISBN 3-8228-8497-9
Author of *Gil Elvgren - All His Glamorous American Pin-Ups* published by Benedikt Taschen Verlag, December 1999. ISBN 3-8228-6611-3
Author of *Pin-Up /The Edward Runci Collection* published worldwide by Collector's Press, Portland, Oregon, January,1997. ISBN 1-888054-15-8

ORIGINAL PAINTINGS FROM THE DEAN

"THE JUDGEMENT OF MARCELLUS AND HIS WIFE BEFORE PONTIUS PILATE AT THE TRIAL"
Oil on Canvas, 24 x 30, Signed, Lower Right

Published in: *the famous book "The Robe" by Lloyd Cassel Douglas, 1947, Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, Mass. Caption: "Your majesty," she said, calmly, "I, too, am a Christian. Marcellus is my husband. May I go with him?" Also commissioned by RKO Pictures for wardrobe designs for the motion picture "The Robe," 1948. Reproduced in* LIFE *magazine, December 8, 1947, page 94, "The Robe—A Popular Classic Novel."*

"ARAB MAN CARRYING GIRL IN DESERT AT NIGHT"
Oil on Canvas, 30 x 40, Signed & Dated 1921, Lower Left

Published in: Cosmopolitan *magazine as a serial novel, October 1922–March 1923 "The Desert Healer" by E.M. Hull.* ***Caption:*** *"To Hosein, imperturbable even in the face of this unprecedented spectacle, Carew vouchsafed only the curt explanation. Abdul el Dhib."* ***Reproduced in:*** Dean Cornwell–Dean of Illustrators *by Patricia Broder, 1978, Watson-Guptill, N.Y. (full page 75) & in re-printed edition, 2001, Collector's Press.*

"THE FIGHT AT MINOWA IN PALESTINE"
Oil on Canvas, 35 x 46, Signed, Lower Left

Published as: *the 2-page Back Endpapers in the famous book, "The Robe" by Lloyd Cassel Douglas, 1947, Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, Mass. Caption: "And now—with a deft maneuver—Marcellus brought the engagement to a dramatic close." Also, commissioned by RKO Pictures for wardrobe designs for the motion picture, "The Robe," 1948.* ***Reproduced in:*** Dean Cornwell—Dean of Illustrators *by Patricia Broder, 1978, Watson-Guptill, N.Y. (full page 164) & in re-printed edition, 2001, Collector's Press. Reproduced in* LIFE *magazine, December 8, 1947, page 91. "The Robe—A Popular Classic Novel."*

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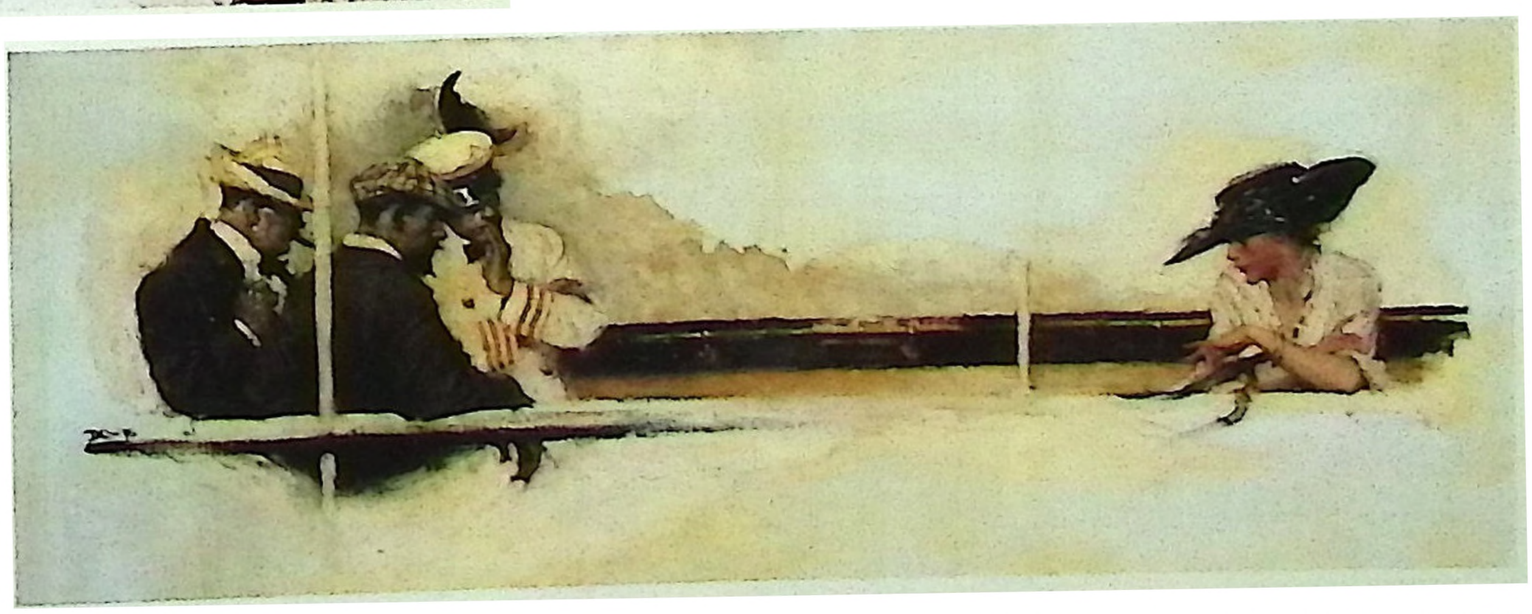
CORNWELL N.Y.C. STUDIO COLLECTION

"ROMANTIC COUPLE SEATED BY PIANO"
Oil on Canvas, 34 x 36, Signed & Dated 1922, Lower Left

Published in: Hearst's International *magazine, March 1922. "One Night in Venice" by F. Britten Austin. Caption: "And when you have gone and are a Prince once more, it will be just as a man that I think of you in my solitude."* ***Reproduced in:*** Dean Cornwell–Dean of Illustrators *by Patricia Broder, 1978, Watson-Guptill, N.Y. (full page 85) & in the re-printed edition, 2001, Collector's Press.*

"THE SAILOR AND THE PRINCESS"
Oil on Canvas, 24 x 46, Signed & Dated 1924, Middle Left

Published in: Cosmopolitan *magazine, January 1924. "A Man At The Crossroads" by Belle Burns Gromer. Caption: "The blending hues of the sarong that had belonged to a Solo princess made her stand out like a brilliant bird."* ***Reproduced in:*** Dean Cornwell–Dean of Illustrators *by Patricia Broder, 1978, Watson-Guptill, N.Y. (full page 78) & in the re-printed edition, 2001, Collector's Press.*



"THREE MEN AND A LADY AT SHIP'S RAILING"
Oil on Canvas, 14 x 34, Signed & Dated 1916

Published in: Red Book *magazine, May 1917. "Somewhere At Sea" by John Fleming Wilson.* ***NOTE:*** *This painting is the earliest published Cornwell original known to exist. In 1914 & 1915 the artist had his first two illustrations published–both in* Red Book *magazine. This prime example of his early artistic brilliance was painted soon after he had spent three months studying with Harvey Dunn. It was also executed shortly after his arrival in New York from Chicago.*

NOTE: The majority of the original paintings on these five pages were cherished by Dean Cornwell throughout his life and enjoyed by the artist and his friends for more than forty-five years in his legendary Sixty-Seventh Street studio and apartment in New York City from 1916 until his death in 1960. Many guests of international, social, and political prominence visited Mr. Cornwell's Manhattan studio and home during his half-century residency. Aside from Mr. Cornwell's stable of beautiful models, his other visitors included scores of movie stars and famous fellow artists from Charles Dana Gibson and James Montgomery Flagg to Harvey Dunn and Norman Rockwell. + Many of these early vintage paintings are considered to be amongst the most desirable and sought after of the artist's career. Others are famous images that have been immortalized by *Life* magazine and a number of other important 20th century cultural publications like: *The Saturday Evening Post, Cosmopolitan, Hearst's International, Red Book*, and *Good Housekeeping*. + Additional Dean Cornwell paintings are available for sale which are not shown on these five pages. Serious inquiries are invited. Included in the balance of this collection are more than two hundred Dean Cornwell original paintings, drawings, and preliminary renderings—the majority of which can be seen in the famous book, "Dean Cornwell - Dean of Illustrators" by Patricia Broder, 1978, Watson-Guptill, N.Y. Also featured in our inventory from the Dean Cornwell Studio Collection are the artist's world famous courtroom and news wire drawings from the Charles Lindbergh 1935 baby kidnapping trial. These were also published in the above referenced book.

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ALEX SCHOMBURG

The Fantastic Art of Alex Schomburg

by Amy Wagner

A portfolio of Alex Schomburg's work is a visual diary of 20th century illustration art and popular culture. Schomburg was an orphan and immigrant. He was also a professional artist by the age of 18. His early assignments included national advertising campaigns, but he soon moved on to the groundbreaking genre of science-fiction. His imagination and productivity matched the relentless demand for pulp magazine illustrations. Then he started producing cover art during the Golden Age of Comics. Simultaneously, he held a steady job with the National Screen Service that eventually gave him the seed money to start freelancing. Years later, Schomburg would be hired by legendary director Stanley Kubrick to render concept art for *2001: A Space Odyssey*.

Alex Schomburg with his wife Helen, c. 1928

Schomburg was an innovator in both science fiction and comic art, impacting future generations of artists in addition to the public-at-large. He was an illustrator, but also a fine artist in every sense of the word. After the misguided crackdown on comics in the mid-'50s, Schomburg followed his own path and produced fine art paintings. He eventually returned to illustration, and in later life, when many artists drift into obscurity, he was re-discovered—and humbled by the recognition he received from his peers. His success reveals more than the range of his artistic skills. His talents included the ability to face uncertain times with confidence and tenacity.

THE BEGINNING

Alex Schomburg's family history was multicultural. His paternal grandfather arrived at Puerto Rico in the early 1830s. Alex's father, Guillermo, was the product of a marriage between his German father and Spanish mother. It was in Germany that Guillermo (aka William or Wilhelm) was educated as a civil engineer.

After receiving his degree, Guillermo returned to Puerto Rico to work on a contract for a local construction project. Though he originally intended to return to Germany once the job had been completed, Guillermo's plans soon took a dramatic turn—he had fallen in love with a young Puerto Rican girl named Francisca Rosa, whose mother worked as a maid for the Schomburg family. Unfortunately, the young lovers' class and social differences made the budding romance quite difficult. The couple postponed their marriage until after the death of Guillermo's mother.

On May 10, 1905, in the small town of Aguadilla in the northwest corner of Puerto Rico, Alex Schomburg was born. He joined five older brothers—Arthur, August, Frederick, Charles, and William—and three older sisters—Carmen, Ana Angelica, and Luisa. Alex would be Guillermo and Francisca's last surviving child; a set of twins, born after Alex, died in infancy.

Guillermo's profession enabled the Schomburgs to reside on

Original book cover illustration for *The World at Bay*, 1954

several plantations and enjoy the comforts of European-style living. On the surface Puerto Rico seemed like an idyllic paradise, but areas of the island harbored desperate poverty. The rampant squalor inevitably led to the spread of diseases such as tuberculosis. Young Alex lost his mother to the disease in 1911, and his father one year later.

Suddenly an orphan at the age of seven, he and the rest of the Schomburg children were faced with a daunting choice. The threat of tuberculosis spurred a mass exodus from Puerto Rico. All of Alex's older brothers eventually immigrated to the U.S. His sisters remained on the island. Alex spent time at a Catholic orphanage, then was sent to live briefly with his uncle, a diplomat named Friedrich von Uffel Schomburg. The circumstances of his childhood could have made Alex bitter; instead he was able to draw upon these experiences and the values that helped him persevere. Though he spoke English exclusively as an adult, he always remembered the Spanish nursery rhymes that were sung to him as a child, and he later shared these songs with his own grandchildren.

COMING TO NEW YORK

In 1917, at the age of 12, Alex arrived in New York harbor on a boat named "Coamo." The shipped docked at Ellis Island in the cold of December. He arrived with his brother Frederick, and the two boys later joined their older brothers, Charles and August, in New York City. The brothers tried to provide for Alex, but he would end up dropping out of public school after the eighth grade. Alex needed to make money. He began an informal apprenticeship with a friend of the Schomburg brothers, an artist named Fred Dahme. Alex was tutored in the use of the airbrush and other art techniques in exchange for doing chores at Dahme's studio.

Years passed, and Alex and his older brothers began to find success in commercial art. The 1925 city directory for New York listed "Alex Schomburg, art titles" at 65 W. 46th Street, and "Schomburg Bros., art titles" right next door. A professional artist at the age of 18, he worked on many projects with his brothers. Alex and August usually produced the art, while Charles and Fred handled the sales. One of their most notable works was a 20-foot wide Sanka display in Grand Central Station. While the display art served as his livelihood, Alex soon grew restless and began to pursue other interests. It was during this period of transition that Alex would end up meeting two people who would change his life.

A naturally detail-oriented person, Alex became interested in radios, which had become the latest craze. He began tinkering with them, working his way through the crude diagrams that enabled a person to assemble the homemade device on his own. There was one diagram, though, that would prove too difficult for even Alex to make sense of. Instead of giving up, he decided to track down Hugo Gernsback, the illustrator of the diagram sheet. Gernsback would later become the creator of *Amazing Stories* and the father of science-fiction art, but he began his career as a diagram artist for home-built radios.

When Alex met Gernsback, a door opened to a new vocation. In a June 1977 interview he gave to the *Oregon Journal*, Schomburg described their encounter: "If anyone can be blamed for starting it, (Gernsback) can. Maybe the fact that I had a German name appealed to him. Anyway, we got to talking, and I ended up doing two covers for his first science fiction magazine." The art Schomburg did for these two covers were the first pieces of cover art he had ever produced—a fortune teller with a crystal ball, and a dapper man with a suit standing next to a wild electrical contraption. These images were science-fiction in only the loosest sense, but they appeared on the November and December 1925 issues of Gernsback's publication, *The Experimenter.*

Gernsback was a dashing character with a sometimes blunt manner. A Prussian immigrant, his dapper attire included white spats, a monocle—even a cape. Alex with his dark, swept-back hair, intelligent eyes, and matinee-idol moustache certainly possessed his own suave demeanor, but Gernsback saw a reflection of himself. Misconceptions about Schomburg's background were fairly common. Because of his surname, Alex often faced assumptions that he was German. Later, the mostly Jewish community of comic book artists and writers Schomburg worked with considered him one of their fellow immigrants. Alex was too polite to point it out, and few of his associates ever realized that Schomburg came from a blended ethnic heritage. The young artist was known as warm and generous. Though he was without question a perfectionist — Alex was quite meticulous in his work space and choice of supplies—he never imposed his own strict standards upon others.

Alex's introduction to radio building had other fortunate consequences. His brother, Charles, had lived in the same apartment building as a young married couple, Roy and Elizabeth Pierce. Elizabeth's cousin, Helen Scott, an immigrant of Scotch-Irish descent, was living with them. At one point, Charles mentioned to Roy that his younger brother could build and install a radio for them at a cost of $15. While Alex was at Roy and Elizabeth's apartment, he also saw Helen for the first time. The following Saturday, Alex and Helen had their first date.

Meanwhile, Alex continued to work with his brothers at their commercial art studio. Gernsback was a frequent visitor, consulting with Alex about sketches he submitted. He explained his transition to illustration in the same 1977 interview: "I really didn't like the displays, so I began working in illustration. I liked to do small things, highly detailed, precise." Furthermore, Alex's working dynamic with his brothers was beginning to change—they were marrying and starting new lives in different directions, and Alex himself married Helen on November 27, 1928. The Schomburg brothers closed their studio that same year, and Alex and Helen moved to the Bronx.

NATIONAL SCREEN SERVICE

Helen settled into life as a full time homemaker, and Alex landed a job at National Screen Service. He produced black-and-white backgrounds for film trailers.

Schomburg recalled the techniques he learned at National in the 1986 book, *Chroma: The Art of Alex Schomburg*, a mono-

Black and white airbrush rendering for National Screen Service, c. 1930s, unpublished. Photo by Grace Weston

graph written by Jon Gustafson: "National is where I learned most of my craft. We did a lot of art of all different kinds. Most of the illustrations were done in black-and-white and...with the aid of an airbrush. This gave me a chance to really learn to operate an airbrush; I became pretty good at it."

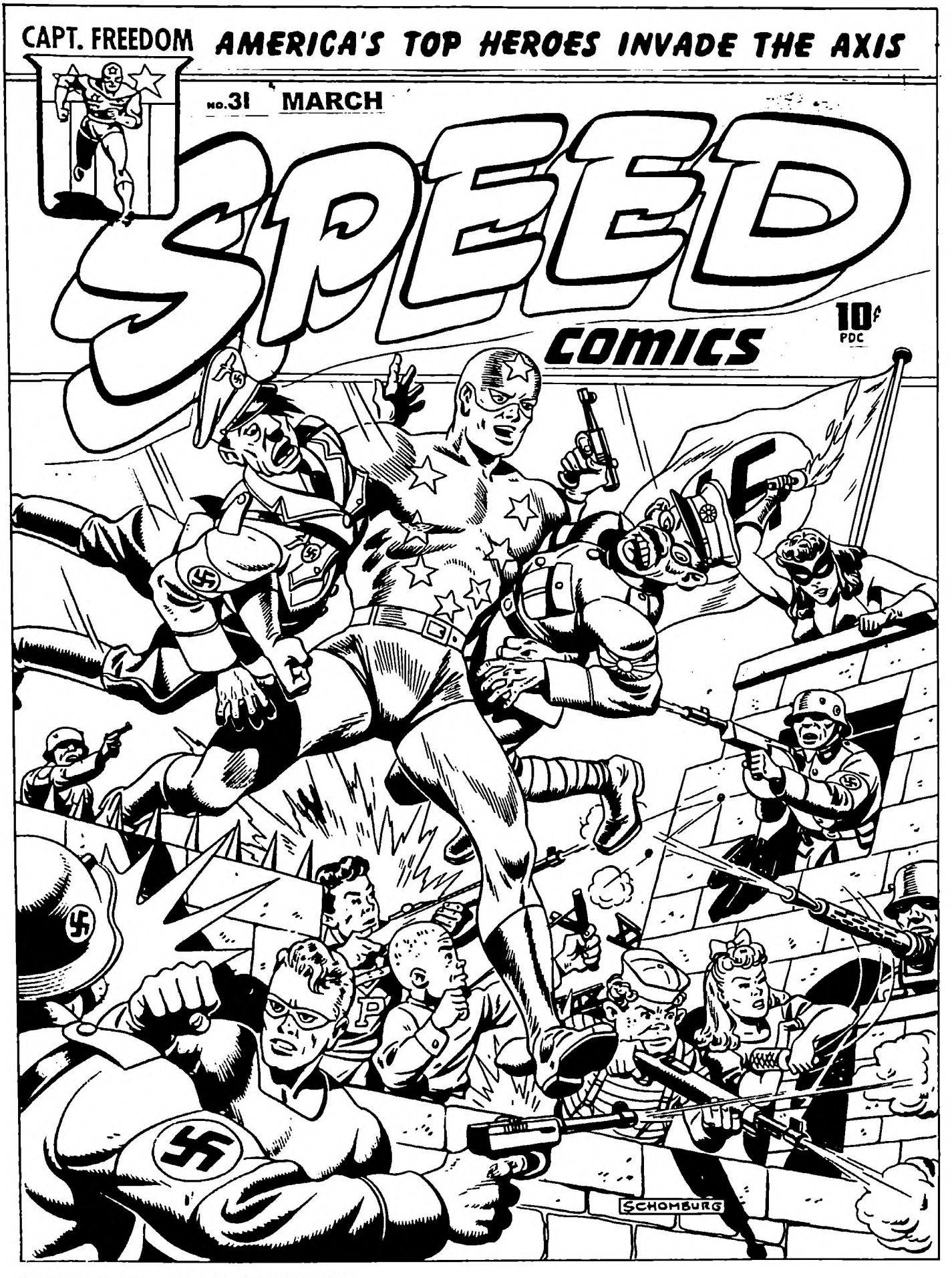
Alex drew a respectable salary at National—$100 per week. However, when the Depression hit, his pay was cut in half and he was forced to supplement his income with freelance work. Schomburg used his off-the-clock lunch hour to race to an editor's office, read a manuscript to come up with a spot illustration, then run back to punch-in at National. In spite of the pressures, Alex worked the rest of the day at his job and produced illustrations at night, and he never missed a deadline for his freelance work.

Like the true professional, Schomburg continued to expand his volume of magazine illustration assignments. He started work for the publication *Astrology*, eventually producing numerous covers, interior illustrations, and even the astrological charts. In 1931, he and Helen bought land in Greenwood Lake, NY, where they built a summer cabin. Their dream of country living and owning a vacation home took on added urgency when their son Richard was born on September 28, 1932 in New York City.

Alex's prosperity was modest and hard-earned, but he did not escape tragedy inflicted by the Depression. On February 2, 1933, Charles Schomburg put a pillowcase over his head and jumped to his death from the 14th floor of the Hotel Taft in New York City. Subsequent newspaper reports and Charles' suicide note blamed a reversal of fortunes for his despondency. Later, Alex and his brothers discovered that a chair Charles had purchased at a junk shop was in fact a genuine antique from the days of Louis XV—an artifact worth more than the sum of his debts.

GOLDEN AGE COMIC BOOKS

Life moved on for Alex and in 1939, he was quite a busy man. Simultaneously he was working in various styles, rendering dreamy airbrushed film trailer backgrounds, lurid pulp and sci-fi illustrations, and precise technical diagrams. Sci-fi magazines began to incorporate more technology into their stories, and Schomburg's eye for detail and ability to depict fantastical machines in a practical form had been forged by



Original cover illustration for *Speed Comics* #31, March 1944

Daring Mystery Comics #1, February 1940

The Human Torch #2, 1940

his work with Gernsback's technical manuals. Throughout the '30s Alex produced interior drawings for *Thrilling Adventure*, *Thrilling Western*, *Thrilling Detective*, and *Thrilling Wonder Stories*. Schomburg's art for the September 1939 issue of *Startling Stories* was his first official sci-fi cover. This image showed space-suited aliens robbing a graveyard of sleeping beauty-like blondes encased in glass-topped coffins. *Chroma* omits the 1925 covers for *The Experimenter* and credits this art as Schomburg's first cover assignment.

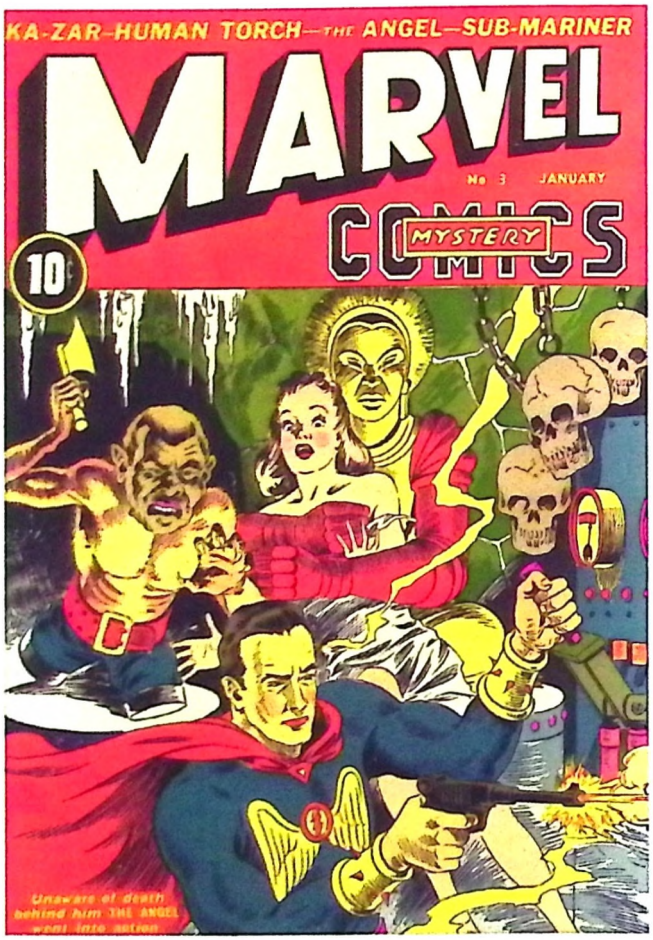
Alex continued his work for National, but he moonlighted on a steady basis for Standard Publications and Timely Comics. In 1939, the Golden Age of Comics was poised to emerge. Martin Goodman, a comic book publisher, took notice of Alex's dependability and artistry, not to mention his return on the dollar. Schomburg was able to execute complicated covers in precise detail, down to every rivet; combining the scrutiny of a draftsman with sweeping, dynamic compositions bursting with action and color. His reputation began to grow in the expanding community of comic book writers and artists, and his prolific output of action-packed covers would make an enduring connection with the fans of this exciting new medium.

Schomburg's remarkable technique was to use very fine brushes, not pens, to achieve his line. His hands were steady enough to use this masterful technique into his 80s. His son Richard described the process in a letter to his own daughter, Susan: "What people consider as his pen-and-ink work was almost exclusively brush-and-ink done with brushes capable of being formed into a very fine point. These came from England, and I remember that shortly before WWII he stocked up on them, anticipating their disappearance from the U.S. art supply market. There are still some around, unused. While at work, he would wipe those brushes, after frequently rinsing them, on his shirt, under his left armpit. I remember a comment to the effect that his shirts wore out there first!"

THE 1940s

Alex Schomburg was a 36-year-old man when Pearl Harbor was bombed in 1941. Though he was too old to enlist, Alex's enormous output of comic book covers contributed to the overall propaganda effort at home, giving life to some of the most effective and controversial imagery of the era. He drew Marvel heroes Captain America, Sub-Mariner, and the Human Torch. Schomburg's comic covers exploded with wholesale destruction of bridges and dams.

One of Schomburg's preferred themes was the rescue of distressed damsels from the clutches of sadists. In the infamous issue #39 of *Exciting Comics*, his cover image showed Nazi soldiers injecting poison into candy, then handing the treats out to unsuspecting children. In his WWII-era art, Alex portrayed America's enemies as abominable exaggerations, playing up racial and cultural stereotypes in scenes that included torture and bondage. In all, Schomburg's comic cover total included



Marvel Comics #3, January 1940

Suspense Comics #3, April 1944

690 8th Avenue, New York City

some 600 images. Viewed in a historical context, the work was consistent with the propaganda commonly seen at the time in movies, newsreels, and training films.

On February 19, 1942, Alex and Helen celebrated the birth of their daughter Diana. The following year, National Screen Service was no longer able to obtain film to make their trailers. The war effort received priority on all raw materials, and the same chemicals used to manufacture film stock were also needed to make munitions. As a result, National closed its art department.

Alex's severance package from National gave him over $1,100, enough to open his own NYC studio, located at 690 8th Avenue. Alex's son Richard was an imaginative sixth grader at the time, and he was enamored of the building's turn-of-the-century, brass-fixtured, cage-like Otis elevator. He commandeered the contraption's manually operated levers on Saturday visits to the empty office building. These afternoons of "rocket ship" play tested the safety features that Otis engineers, having once been boys themselves, had anticipated and incorporated into their designs. Interestingly, the building that housed Schomburg's studio still stands and is located one half block from The Milford Plaza Hotel in Midtown Manhattan's Theater District.

In 1945, Schomburg moved his family to a home in New Canaan, Connecticut. He traveled daily by train to his studio in NYC. By 1948, the grind of his work schedule and the daily commute was wearing on him. When the stomach ulcers that plagued him showed no signs of relenting, Schomburg decided it was time for a change, and he opened a studio in the Gurley Building on the main square of Stamford, Connecticut. He hoped to continue his commercial art career for clients in New York City.

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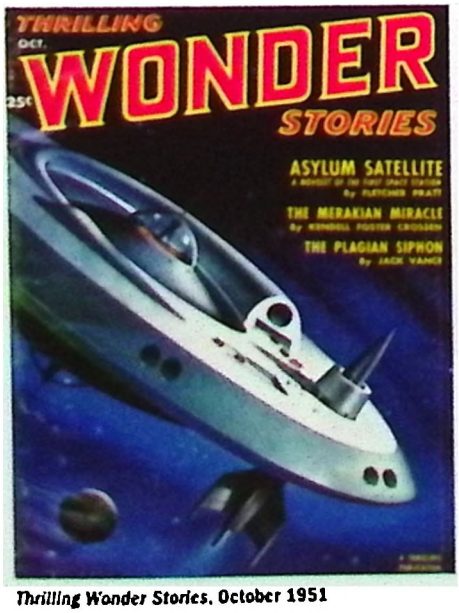
Original interior pulp magazine illustration, c. 1950s



Thrilling Wonder Stories, October 1951

An obstacle to this plan was the lack of a timely and reliable system to get finished artwork from the studio to his clients. Luckily, a family friend, Sammy Raymond, was an amateur chicken farmer who supplied the Schomburgs with fresh eggs. Sammy was also a train engineer, and he became Alex's delivery service. Sammy took the paintings with him on the train and delivered them himself to Alex's clients.

Alex's comic covers gained him a reputation. Seeking to expand his career, Alex took a chance in the late 1940s. He wrote and illustrated a one-issue comic called *The Planeteers*. A decade later, Alex drew all the interior pages for the *Jon Juan* comic written by Jerry Siegel. Though the Golden Age of Comics was waning in the early 1950s, the space race was on the horizon. Alex turned his attention back to science-fiction art. He produced a series of covers for sci-fi magazines such as *Thrilling Wonder Stories* and *Startling Stories*. He was also the exclusive cover artist for the short-lived *Science Fiction Plus*, which re-united him with its publisher, Hugo Gernsback.

Original illustration for *Everyday Astrology*, c. early 1950s ➤

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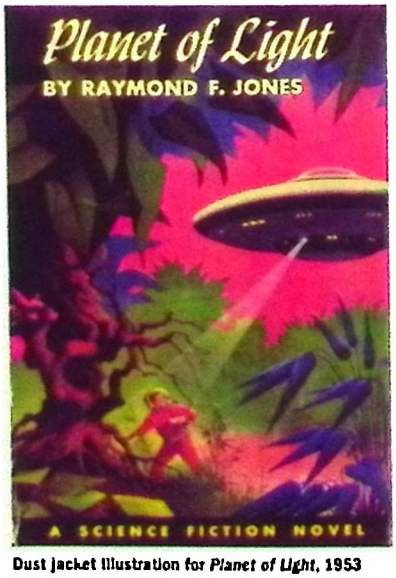
Endpaper illustration for the Winston Adventures in Science Fiction series of books, 1952. Photo by Grace Weston



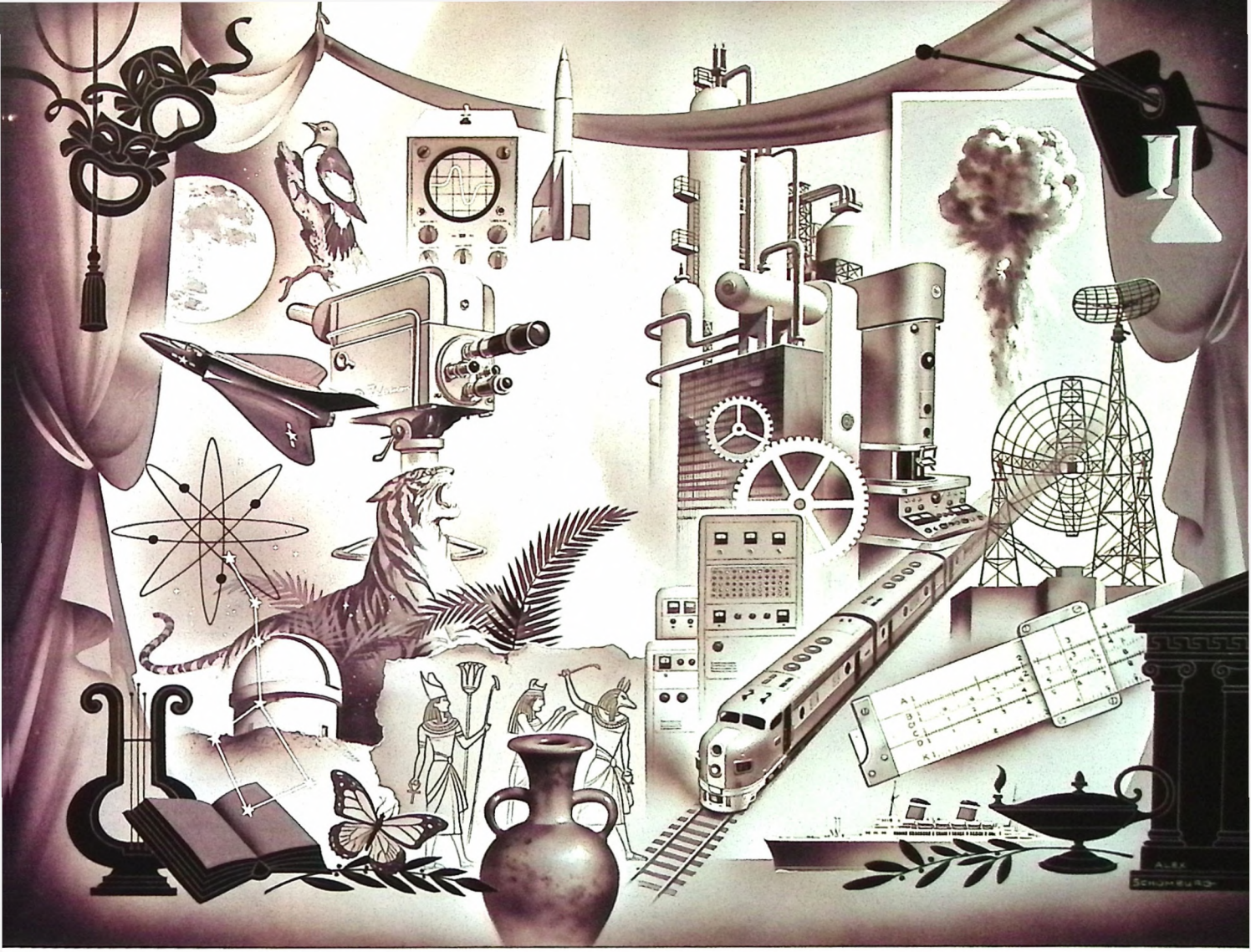
Dust jacket illustration for *Planet of Light*, 1953

THE WINSTON ENDPAPERS

Schomburg was never sure exactly when or how he became the only artist client of the famous Scott Meredith Literary Agency in New York City. Susan Schomburg, Alex's granddaughter, found this note among Alex's records: "I cannot truly recall just when I made the contact with the Scott Meredith Literary Agency, having offices on Fifth Avenue at 42nd St... but it is my opinion that they sought my services, since I was the only artist represented by the agency." It was at this time that Schomburg began creating original art for book dust jackets and endpapers. He would construct full-scale mock-ups of the proposed covers, sometimes completing several samples with different images.

In 1952, Schomburg was paid by the John C. Winston Publishing Company for cover art and two endpapers for a series of juvenile sci-fi books. The "Winston Endpapers" won Schomburg a new generation of fans. This career milestone was recorded in one of the many ledgers Schomburg kept as a careful record of all his assignments:

1952, January ledger entry:
Winston cover ($200); end paper ($125).
April, *Islands in the Sky* cover.
October (another Winston Endpaper).



Unpublished endpaper illustration for the Winston Adventures in Science Fiction series of books, 1952. Photo by Grace Weston

In this landmark illustration for Winston, Schomburg's rocket ships, aliens, astronauts, and a laser-eyed Cyclops robot became icons of sci-fi imagery. For the kids who read the Winston juvenile series, this image—used as both the front and back endpaper—captured the wonder and promise of the Space Age. *Chroma* reproduces the classic Winston endpaper. In 1997, the illustration was used again as endpapers for the book *Infinite Worlds*, a survey of sci-fi art.

According to Steve Chaplin, a collector and web-based resource on the series, the Winston Adventures in Science Fiction books were published from 1952-61. Of the 36 titles in the series (37 if one includes a 1957 non-fiction companion book), Schomburg produced 18 full-color covers. In *Chroma*, a second, lesser known endpaper by Schomburg is shown next to the classic image. The second endpaper depicts 1950s technology—trains, cameras, radios, smoke stacks, and a mushroom cloud. It showcases Schomburg's respect for the source material in science and industry that was the foundation of his fantasy work.

It's unfortunate that this second endpaper illustration was apparently unused. Two interesting theories were suggested by juvenile series book collector and dealer Dan Josslin: perhaps the science-based image was produced first but rejected by the publisher, who then commissioned a second image; or maybe the science-based image was commissioned for a separate series of kids' science books, which may or may not have ever been published.

Nonetheless, the Winston Science Fiction Series was immensely popular with its target audience of pre-teen boys in the 1950s. Some of the books were adapted into radio serials, but it is the artwork,—particularly the Schomburg endpapers and covers—that collectors of the books today recall most fondly.

FINE ART

Just as Schomburg's position as a creative force in the fields of comic and science-fiction art seemed secure, his career path was about to take a detour.

***August Noon*, oil on canvas, c. 1954**

In 1954, the comic book industry was under attack following the publication of *Seduction of the Innocent*. The book's author, New York psychiatrist Dr. Fredric Wertham, blamed juvenile crime and violence on the influence of comics. As a result, many comic book artists went into hiding. Schomburg, on the other hand, who had been producing personal fine art pieces for his own education and enjoyment, entered an exhibition. From June-July 1954, Schomburg's oil painting titled "August Noon" was exhibited at the Fifth Annual New England Exhibition, The Silvermine Guild of Artists. Schomburg's painting won the Gorham Press, Norwalk, Connecticut award of $25. The exhibition catalog notes that the painting was offered for sale for $750.

This quiet portrait shows three figures in the same interior. An old woman lies on a bed. An old man wrings his hands above a loaf of bread. The open door of a bathroom reveals the back of a young woman turning to look out the window. The stylized figures and subject matter evoke the work of Thomas Hart Benton. The painting was one of a handful of personal fine art pieces Schomburg created in wildly different genres. Helen objected to this particular image as the young woman in the background was nude; Alex could hang the painting in a guest bedroom, but not in the living room of their home.

Helen approved of the more representational "Egg Farm, Tuxedo, New York." This Norman Rockwell-esque scene of family life was also autobiographical. The egg farm was a stop on the way to the Schomburg's Greenwood Lake cabin in New York State. Schomburg's granddaughter Susan identifies the individuals depicted in the painting: "The man bending over examining the corn is my grandpa. The lady in the red dress with her purse open is my grandma. The little girl in the light blue dress and hat is my Aunt Diana. The boy on the bumper of the car is my dad reading a comic book. The man smoking the pipe is Roy (Pierce). The car is the two-tone dark blue/gray Buick that my grandpa bought before the war. The license plate 5D50 in the painting was their actual license number."

In his 80s, Alex wrote about this work in a letter to Roy Pierce, who was featured in the painting and was the same Roy who helped introduce Alex to Helen: "The entire painting is more or less idealistic, a glimpse of a time gone by, never to return and full of so many little things that are part of one's life. I look at this painting every day and sometimes my eyes fill with tears as my mind drifts backwards in time to other happy, happier days."

Egg Farm, Tuxedo, New York, oil on canvas, c. 1950s

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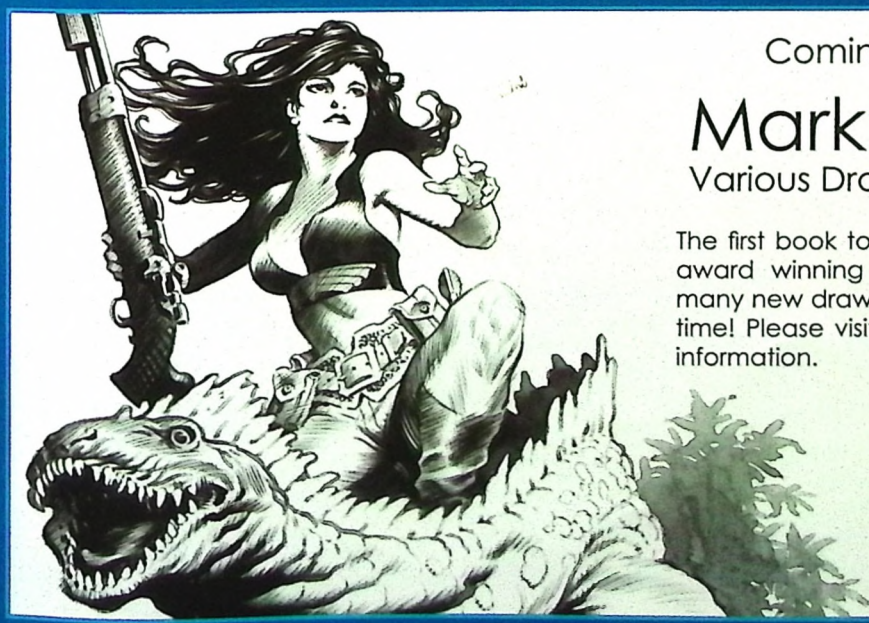

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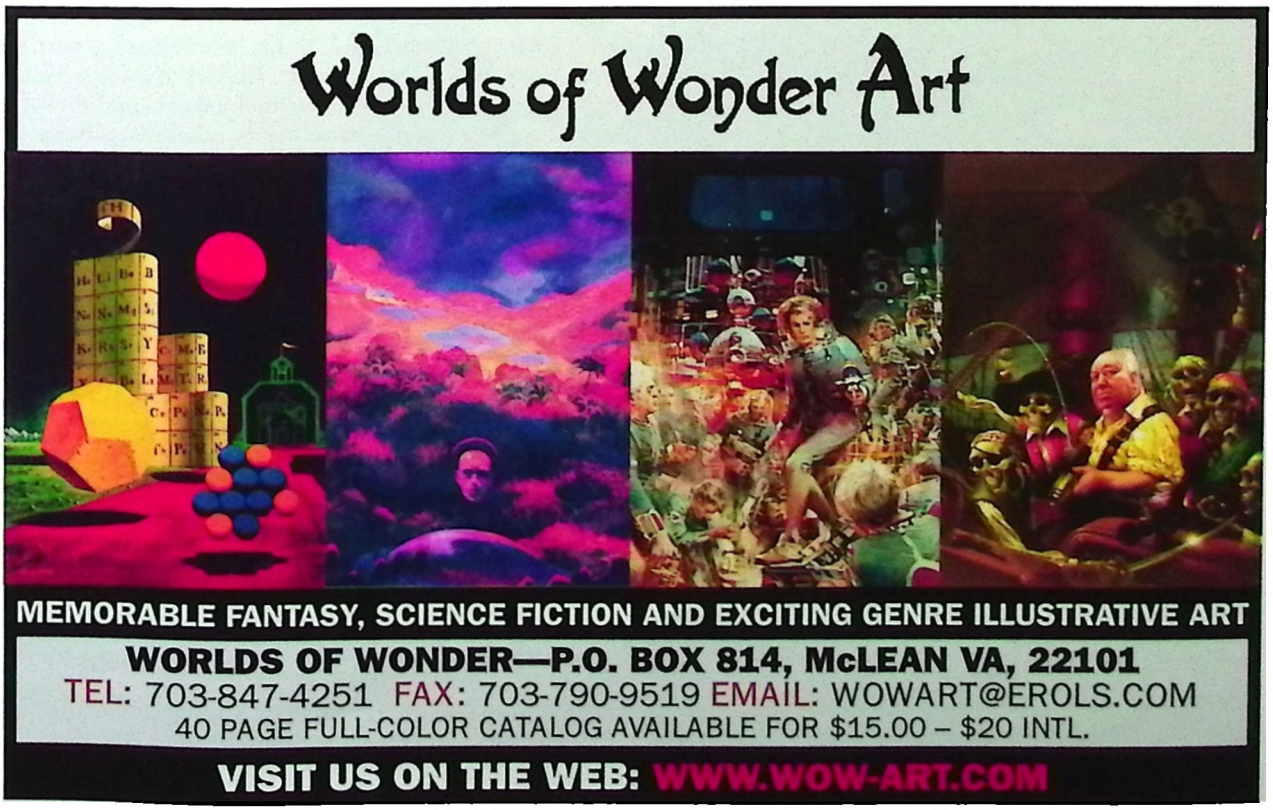
Another of Schomburg's personal works started as a "spec" *Saturday Evening Post* cover. The painting depicted the view from Schomburg's Stamford studio. It was rejected by the magazine and returned to the family's private collection. Under the title "Atlantic Street & Park Row, Stamford," it was exhibited in public for the first time on June 16, 2001 at the opening of Susan Schomburg's fine art gallery in Santa Monica, CA.

"A LOT OF PEOPLE THOUGHT I DIED"

In 1954, Schomburg decided to move to Spokane, Washington. The location of the move was family related, as Helen's brother Duncan lived in the area. Son Richard pursued graduate studies in electrical engineering in Seattle. Before the move, Alex purchased two Wold airbrushes to join the original he used at National Screen Service. These airbrushes proved so hardy that he used them into the 1980s. He gave one of his "spares" to daughter Diana, who was an art teacher.

Alex hoped to continue his commercial art assignments, but moving west had unexpected consequences. Recalling these times, he told the *Oregon Journal* reporter: "To tell the truth, when I moved out West with my family in 1954, a lot of people thought I died." Phone calls with job offers became infrequent, since Spokane was a lumber town with limited potential for an artist. Undaunted, Schomburg took his portfolio of rocket ships and film trailer backgrounds around to local businesses. He supplemented his income with local advertising work, as well as the occasional sci-fi cover.

Original illustration based on photos of Saturn's rings, c. 1980s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◄ ***Atlantic Street and Park Row, Stamford*, previously unpublished. This was the view from Schomburg's studio in Connecticut. Photo by Grace Weston**

For the next decade, his bread-and-butter job was with the Venus Pen & Pencil Company. Schomburg drew sketches for paint-by-number kits and determined the color break-downs to produce the final paintings. These must have been labor intensive projects as Helen had a role in the production.

In an undated interview with Schomburg for the Oregon paper, *The Newberg Graphic*, reporter Sharon Harper described the process: "Six months out of the year, Schomburg and his wife work on master drawings for an Eastern firm which produces paint-by-number sets. He has worked with this company for 17 years, creating full-size paintings and then breaking them up into areas of different color. He specifies the numbers (that) stand for colors, and his wife fills in the color."

Harsh weather and the difficulty of securing steady work curbed Schomburg's enthusiasm for Washington State. During a 1961 visit to Oregon, the family discovered the small town of Newberg, about 15 miles from Portland. They moved there in 1962.

After 40 years as a professional artist, Schomburg was beginning to be recognized for his contributions to the worlds of comic and sci-fi art. He received a 1962 Hugo nomination for Best Professional Artist. In February 1964, his now classic image of the Statue of Liberty in a desert landscape appeared on the cover of *Amazing Stories*. In an October 1977 newspaper interview for the *Oregon Statesman Capitol Journal*, Schomburg offered this comment on the similarity of the *Planet of the Apes* scene to his magazine cover: "You know, they stole this thing."

In the 1960s, Schomburg's output of signature sci-fi and book cover images dwindled. To his fans in these genres, he seemed to enter a dormant decade. The lack of comic art contributed to the rumors that Schomburg had ceased to work, or perhaps met with illness or injury. Schomburg, however, was merely working at home, expanding his repertoire of skills. He decided to build a vacation home. Alex was an accomplished carpenter and woodworker, having crafted handmade toys for his grandchildren. He hired a contractor who laid the foundation and frame for a second home, a beach house in Neskowin, Oregon. The house became a family project—Alex did the interior carpentry and finishing; Richard completed most of the plumbing and electrical components. This beach house is the only one of Alex's residences that is still in the family.

COLLABORATION WITH STANLEY KUBRICK

On July 4, 1965, this note appears in Schomburg's ledger: *MGM Assignment through Scott Meredith Agency, rec'd $800 total.*

This "MGM Assignment" was perhaps the most important opportunity of his career. The call came first from his agent, Scott Meredith. Would he be interested in a job on a science fiction film from a script by Arthur C. Clarke?

The man who hired Schomburg was reclusive film director Stanley Kubrick. The film became *2001: A Space Odyssey*.

Kubrick's development process was notoriously secretive and prolonged. Little is known about Schomburg's contribu-

Original illustration for *Amazing Stories*, February 1964. Photo by Grace Weston ➤

ALEX
SCHOMBURG

tions to *2001*. The ledger confirms he was given expense money to stay at the Essex House Hotel. According to son Richard, Schomburg met one-on-one with Kubrick at the Essex House for several weeks. They would discuss the director's ideas for the production, and Schomburg would retire to his room to produce sketches. Kubrick's toughest job, Schomburg said, was having terrestrial environments designed that "would not possibly be identified as earthly, and yet would be recognized."

Early in the 1960s, Schomburg developed sketches of life on an alien planet for several weeks, but chose not to go with Kubrick when the production was moved to England. A brief note from Alex himself on the subject, typed as part of a long-planned but never completed autobiography, states: "Kubrick was pleased with my work, and asked if I would join the group and go to England for filming. Here I must tell you, sadly, of the biggest mistake I ever made in my life. I rejected the offer. I regret it to this day. I will regret it to my dying day. I could not, in all honesty leave my family, now with serious problems, to themselves." The "serious problems" Alex alluded to was often assumed to be the Alzheimer's disease that would eventually claim Helen. In fact, it was a family rift regarding Diana's upcoming wedding that called Alex away from his collaboration with Kubrick. Publicly, Alex always contended he would have made the same decision again and not gone with Kubrick. No images pertaining to *2001* have yet been found in the Schomburg family archives, and sources familiar with Kubrick's working methods confirm that the director probably kept any art Schomburg produced for the project. Chances are Schomburg's images for the film were quickly rendered concept art. In 1970s interviews for local Oregon newspapers, Schomburg's work on *2001* was described in terms such as "animation," and "alien landscapes." Any "animation" produced would more likely have been in keeping with the model animation used in the finished film. The "alien landscape" references may have been an attempt to render the distorted landscapes images eventually used at the end of the movie.

Still, he may have had a lingering wish to be involved in film. When *Star Wars* was on the rampage in 1977, he mentioned in an interview that he would have loved to have worked on a sequel to the George Lucas blockbuster.

RESOURCES AND INSPIRATION

Space flight and the moon landing in 1969 must have thrilled Schomburg. In the case of Neil Armstrong's historic step onto the lunar surface, the images on television brought Schomburg a shiver of recognition. In a 1977 interview for *The Sunday Columbian*, Schomburg described the "goose bumps" he got seeing current events mirror his January 1953 illustration of a moon expedition in *Startling Stories*: "It's almost exactly like the photographs of Neil Armstrong on the moon. I even had the brace on the flag like it is in the Armstrong photo."

For years, Schomburg filled his head with stories from horror pulp magazines in order to provide cover images and spot illustrations. These stories and images didn't evaporate—they percolated and would startle him out of his sleep. He kept a notebook on his bedside and would jot down these ideas. None of these notebooks have been found, and it isn't clear if he filled them with sketches or phrases. Still, there are a number of interviews where he credits his nightmares and notebooks as the seeds of his best work.

In addition to drawing upon his own vivid imagination, Schomburg frequented libraries and kept stacks of *National Geographic* and *Life* magazines. His facility with technical manuals and rendering always served him well, most notably for his 1978 cover assignment for *Analog* magazine. He recalled the story in *Chroma*: "I was working on a rough sketch of a space station and on a sudden impulse decided to write Ben Bova, who was editing *Analog* at the time. ...I ended up sending him the pencil sketch; he liked it and wanted it, but policy dictated that cover art relate to a story and he had none at the time. Eventually, one did come in, but Bova suggested I show the shuttle "Columbia" instead of the spaceship I had drawn. I had a heck of a time getting information on the space shuttle then, but I managed by going to the Portland Public Library and plowing through dozens of technical journals."

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

In the 1970s Schomburg returned to prominence as both a science fiction and comic artist. A 1975 book titled *Science Fiction Art* by award-winning sci-fi historian and author Brian Aldiss reprinted nine Schomburg covers. That same year, a Stanford University professor tracked Schomburg down to learn more about the artist's WWII comic covers. Renewed interest in his work, combined with the discovery that Schomburg had not gone to the great beyond but merely settled in Oregon, kept the phone ringing.

In 1976, Howard Lowery of Collector's Showcase in California contacted Schomburg with the idea of re-creating classic comic book cover art for auction. Schomburg made a call to Stan Lee and not only got the copyright clearance from Marvel, but also a new comic cover assignment. In July 1976, Schomburg was guest of honor at Novacon 5 in Portland, beginning a round of convention appearances and awards. In 1977 he created the cover for *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*, and two years later he was the Artist Guest of Honor at MosCon, Moscow, Idaho and recipient of MosCon's Lensman Award for lifetime service to the field of science-fiction. He was a panelist discussing "Religion in Science Fiction & Comics" at the 16th Annual San Diego Comic Con.

Schomburg continued rendering sci-fi covers in 1984 and 1985 for *Amazing*. In 1984 he won the Frank R. Paul Award. A milestone in Schomburg's life came in 1986 with the publication of *Chroma: The Art of Alex Schomburg*. For the first time some of Schomburg's personal art saw print as well. The 1980s brought personal hardship for Alex: In February 1985, his wife Helen passed away after enduring many years with Alzheimer's; their daughter Diana died in 1988.

At the close of the decade, a Special Hugo Award for Lifetime Achievement was awarded to Alex in 1989. Schomburg didn't seek to be "rediscovered." He was surprised at the astronomical prices old comic books commanded from collectors. His own collection had been dismantled, literally, years before by Helen. While he had copies of almost every cover, Helen had purged the comics' interior pages from their home. As she told

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a reporter in 1977: "I just didn't like the idea of our children reading those books. I didn't like the grammar."

While the interest and calls continued, Schomburg's health began to fail. In 1993 he moved out of his Newberg home and into his son Richard's house in Hillsboro. His final residence was a nursing home in Beaverton. Schomburg was humbled by the lasting impact his images generated. At the age of 71, he offered this comment on his influence: "Those new fellows can draw me under the table... It's nice to know that when I'm gone these things will be remembered."

Alex Schomburg passed away on April 7, 1998, about a month shy of his 93rd birthday. Following his death, the family began to take steps to preserve his legacy. The Estate of Alex Schomburg was formed and the family has participated in public events such as Comic Con, San Diego. The Estate now maintains the official Alex Schomburg website, where fans can learn more about the artist and view some of his favorite personal works. One hundred years after his birth, the art of Alex Schomburg continues to amaze and delight his fans. In addition to the landmark images he produced, his career is defined by his awe-inspiring capacity to work. Under circumstances that may have deterred others, Alex's talent and persistence allowed him to provide a comfortable lifestyle for his family. Schomburg's devotion to his work and family, along with his imagination and technique, allowed his career as an artist and illustrator to prosper across six decades.

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Amy Wagner is a writer and book collector. She can be reached via e-mail at info@stuartngbooks.com.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
I am indebted to Susan Schomburg. Her enthusiasm and support launched this project. This retrospective exists thanks to her cooperation and courtesy. I would also like to acknowledge Richard Schomburg for his recollections of Alex and the family's history that enhanced this story. Steve Chaplin and Dan Josslin generously shared their expertise regarding the Winston Series books. Special thanks to researcher, author, and collector Armando Mendez and Stuart Ng, specialist in books on illustration, animation, and comic art.

WEBSITES:
The Official Estate of Alex Schomburg Website: www.alexschomburg.com

Susan Schomburg's Fine Art Gallery: www.schomburggallery.com

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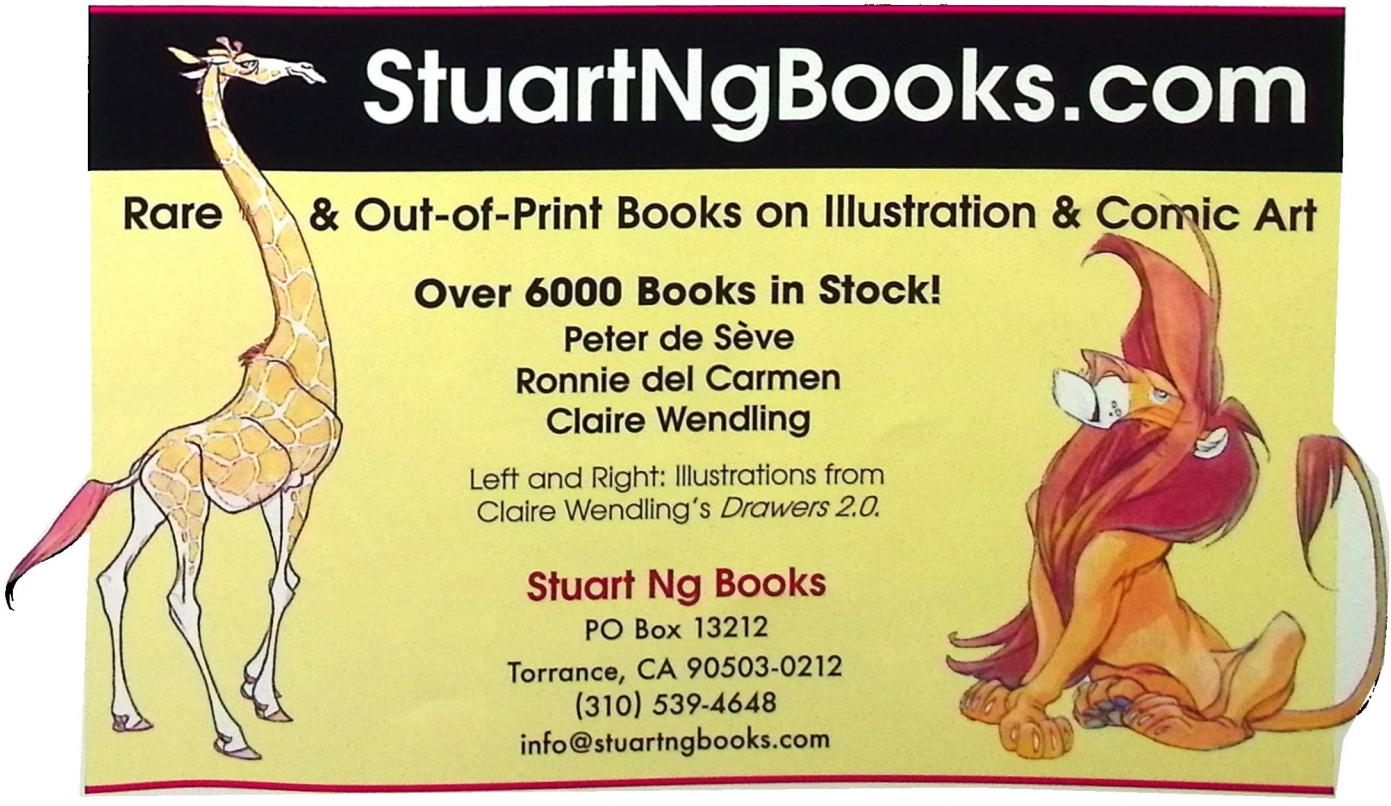


◄ *Nightmare with Black Widow*, unpublished fine art painting

Lee Brownlow

Lee Brown Coye in his studio at 117 1/2 East Genesee Street, 1949

Sticks and Bones:

The Life & Art of Lee Brown Coye

By Luis Ortiz

Lee Brown Coye was pacing the floor of his studio in Hamilton, New York, surrounded by the chaos of half-finished sculptures, wood signs, and other commercial art jobs. A few months earlier he had visited New York City looking for commissions and had picked up some assignments to illustrate stories for *Fantastic Stories of Imagination* and a cover assignment for the *Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction*. It had been 10 years since his last published illustration, done for the July 1952 *Weird Tales*. After the long layoff he was feeling some trepidation at being able to meet the requirements of the magazines, and he shared his anxiety with his friend John Vetter.

Vetter was visiting Coye's upstate New York studio for the first time and was surprised to see the artist working on store signs to make a living. By 1962 Coye was an artist all but forgotten except for pulp fans who still remembered his phantasmagoric run for *Weird Tales*. Vetter, one of these fans, had contacted Coye earlier that year and encouraged him to attempt new work in the fantasy and horror fields, even going as far as accompanying Lee on his job-hunting trip to New York. That day in Manhattan, Coye was ashamed of the work in the portfolio and, despite his art background, felt like an anachronism. Some of the older art directors remembered Coye and were willing to meet him, but few offered work.

At first appearance Coye's long-boned, wiry frame—never quite getting over 145 pounds throughout his life, and his preference for wearing blue jeans, long before the present day fashion for denim—suggested the character of a farmer. However, Coye was a magnet for people who recognized the uniqueness of his art, a uniqueness that survived through the many metamorphosing art trends of 20th Century America.

While most artists' aspirations are focused and straightforward, Lee Brown Coye was an eccentric, zigzagging his way through the byways of fine and commercial art. Due to his incomplete education, hard drinking, and emotional tremors, he was always unsure of himself and the quality of the art he would create throughout his life. This uncertainty drove him to keep busy with new projects and art, regardless of setbacks.

Coye created pulp art, fine art, sculptures in silver and wood, murals, three-dimensional models, as well as book and magazine illustrations. He was also a photographer and, at times, a writer with a knack for telling unusual folk tales. For all his emotional attachment to the central New York State region where he was born, there was never the degree of monotony in his work that we find in the work of many regional artists. Lee's art represented a superstitious blue-collar world and revealed the dark emotional aura of even the most mundane neighborhoods and the strange people that lived there.

< Original cover illustration for *Fantastic Stories of Imagination*, June 1963, illustrating "The Mirror of Cagliostro." Tempera

Scratchboard illustration, 1944

Scratchboard Illustrations for *The Seventh Ogre*, 1932

Lee Brown Coye was born on July 24, 1907 in a house on Sabine Street in Syracuse, New York. Before he was a year old, his parents moved to Tully, New York, a small town 18 miles south of Syracuse. His father, William Coye, was a typewriter man. He commuted by train to Syracuse where he worked for Smith & Brothers Typewriter Company, a business that began in 1903 when Lyman Cornelius Smith, who had made his fortune in firearms (he's the Smith in Smith & Wesson), started manufacturing Smith Premier Typewriters in a former shotgun factory. William Coye was a cousin of Lyman Smith, and worked in the production department of the typewriter company as a "liner"—the person responsible for the alignment of the type-striking keys.

As a child Lee was considered a "holy terror," although his mischief chiefly ran to Tom Sawyer-ish tricks and retorts. A Tully resident recalled looking out the rear window of the Old Reliable Drug Store one day and seeing young Lee painting broad white stripes on a stray cat. By age 13 Lee was already training himself to be an artist. He had borrowed *Suggestions for a Course of Instruction in Color* and *Free Hand Perspective and Drawing* from the school library, and both books were long overdue. Lee's parents were not at ease with their son's artistic leaning; his father expected him to take a job at the typewriter company that would become Smith-Corona.

At the age of 21, already married to a girl he had met on a high school blind date, Coye moved to Leonia, New Jersey against his father's wishes. For a short time he was part of the art colony there, taking lessons from the woodcut master illustrator Howard McCormick. Up until the stock market debacle in October 1929, Coye had an idea of becoming a cartoonist or children's book illustrator. After the crash he was without job prospects or money, and was forced to return home to upstate New York. Lee soon set up a studio in Cortland in partnership with recent art school graduate Leo Kaplan, and published a children's book, *The Seventh Ogre*, based on an old East Indian tale, written and illustrated by Coye and designed by Kaplan. The pair had talked a Rochester printer into extending them credit, but they were too broke to pay for the printing when the bill came due and the project flopped.

Through most of the Great Depression, Coye was forced to labor as a dissatisfied advertising agency art director working on small town accounts, appearing in places like the trade magazine *The Milk Dealer*. In 1934, under the aegis of PWAP, the first federal public works for artists program, he designed

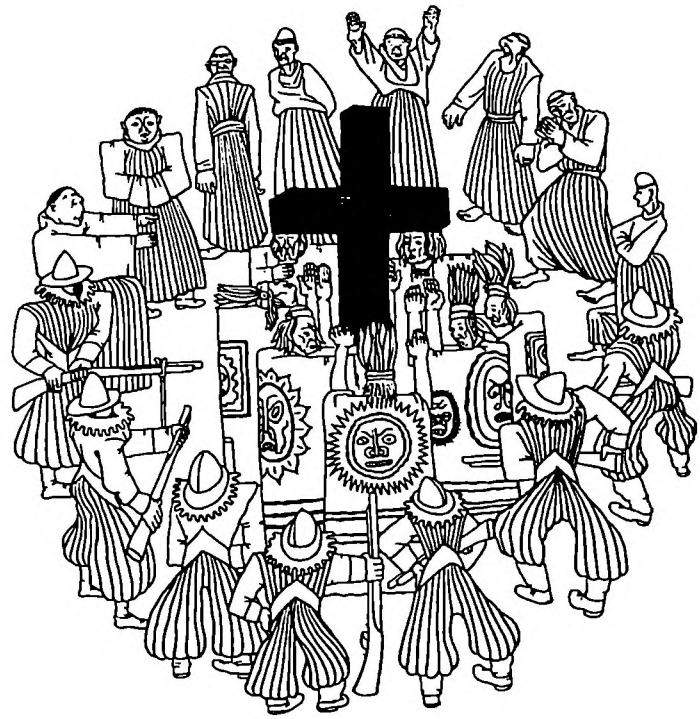
Scratchboard illustration, 1944

and painted (from a 20-foot ladder) a large historical mural in Cazenovia, New York.

In the spring of 1938 he had been commissioned to illustrate Stephen Vincent Benét's *Johnny Pye and the Foolkiller*, but the author hated Coye's cartoony style, and forced the publisher to use another artist, Charles Child, who also happened to be a close friend of Benét. The published Pye artwork done by Child displayed a woodcut style similar to the work Coye had already done for the book. Soured by these developments, Coye went back to mural painting and advertising art. Years would pass before he would seek other illustrating assignments.

Coye seemed ready to make a career breakthrough when the Whitney Museum accepted some of his watercolors for its annual exhibitions in 1939 (his work appeared alongside Reginald Marsh, Edward Hopper, and Peggy Bacon). After the show, Coye was surprised to hear that the New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art had bought one of his paintings from the exhibit for its permanent collection.

By then, however, the art world was moving in a different direction. Though he appeared in the 1940 Whitney Annual, the arrival of abstractionists fleeing war-torn Europe soon forced American artists working in a realistic style, like Coye, to the periphery of the art scene. While Coye dabbled in abstract paintings, and later worked as a medical artist and cartoonist, he had always primarily considered himself an illustrator. Many of his paintings during this period were based on books, including *Treasure Island* and stories by Washington Irving.



Scratchboard illustration for *Knickerbocker*, unpublished, c. 1945

Throughout his life Lee would continue taking inspiration from the written word.

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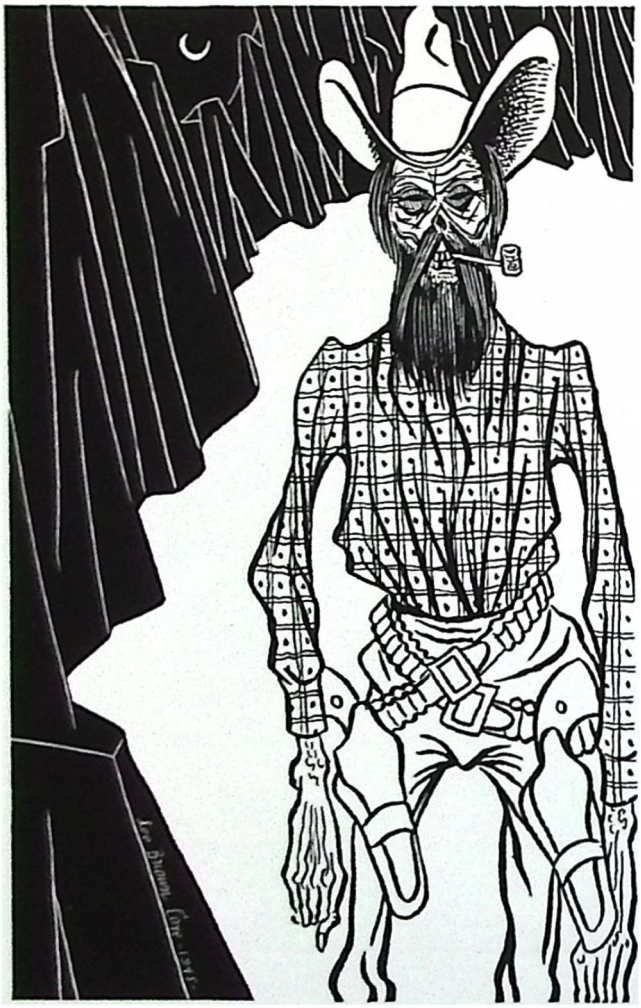
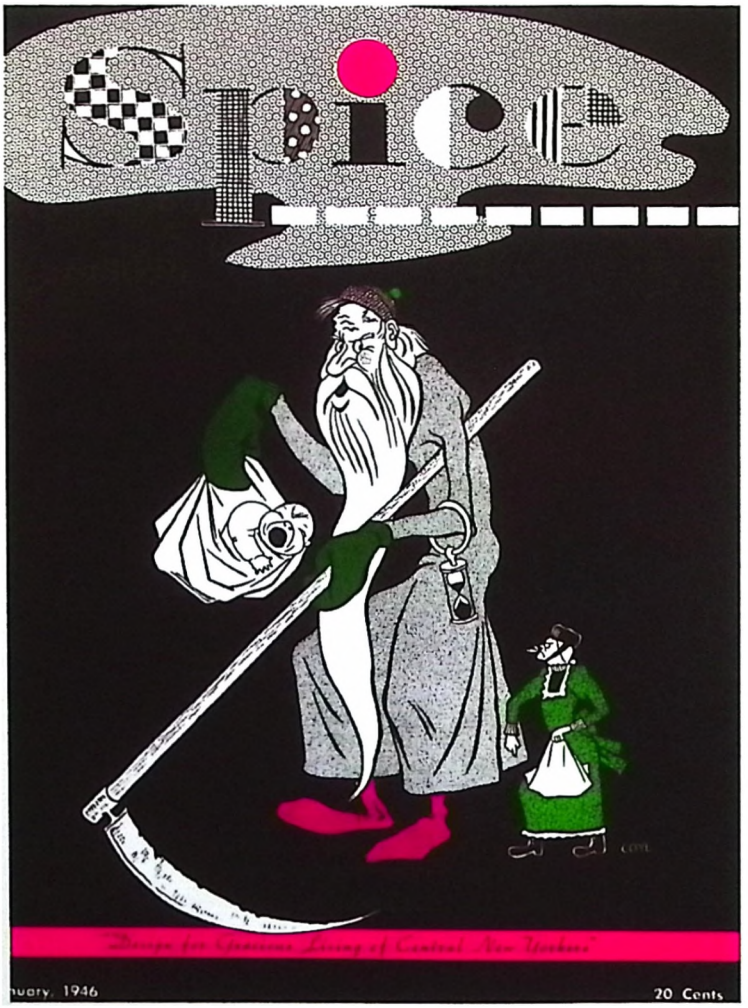


Illustration for *Who Knocks?*, "The Ghosts of Steamboat Coulee," 1946



Spice, January 1946

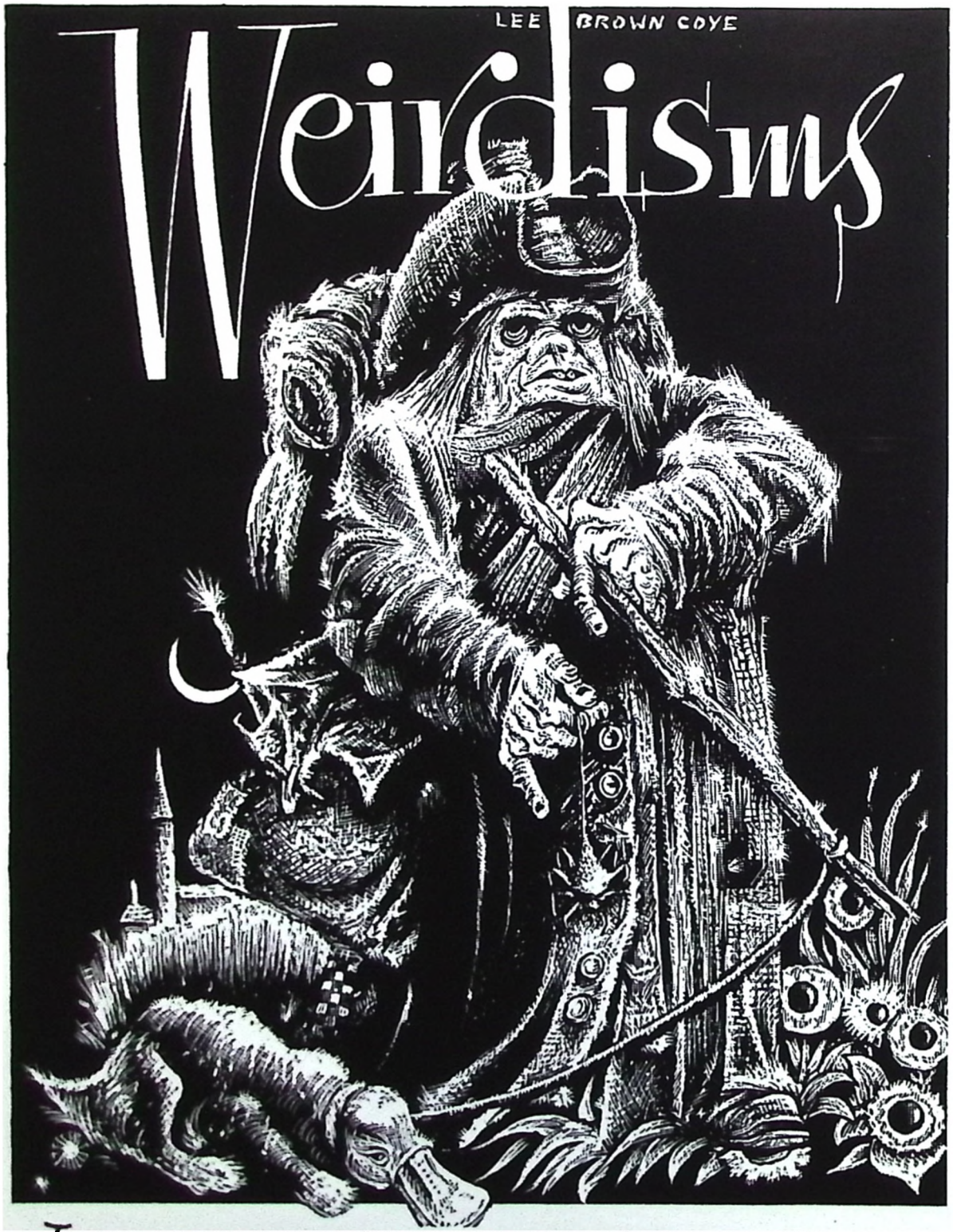
By 1944, commissions had dried up and Coye was no longer invited to Whitney's annual exhibitions. On a referral by a central New York State newspaperman, Coye stumbled into illustrating a book of horror stories published by Farrar & Rinehart and edited by author, editor, and small press publisher August Derleth. Coye, who was a fan of ghost tales and fascinated by folk superstitions, fell under the spell of the stories in *Sleep No More* and created 25 illustrations, dust-jacket art, and an unknown number of drawings that did not make it into the book — because the publisher thought some too gruesome — including one piece showing a pair of hanged men, audaciously detailed in death. While working on the drawings, Coye told an interviewer for a Syracuse newspaper, "I love horrific pictures." Two more horror collections from Derleth would follow in 1946 and 1947. For these books the artist designed dozens of diabolic illustrations that veered from childish whimsy to disturbing modernistic freakishness. These works established him as a horror specialist.

A history buff, Coye had drawn pictures showing bodies on Civil War battlefields, but had never before shown rotting flesh. There is no mistaking the horrid display of corpses that he used to flesh out the supernatural terrors in the Derleth anthologies. With the Depression still fresh in people's minds and World War II raging, a range of new attitudes and anxieties had developed in the American psyche. Newsreel audiences saw the flotsam of bodies floating on the tide off Normandy Beach and would soon be horrified at the mass graves and emaciated bodies revealed at Auschwitz and other concentration camps. These brutal images brought the barbaric intrusion inherent in most gothic fiction into everyday life and introduced a dark, almost fantastic reality, horrific and completely unseen before, within the familiar. In that respect, Coye was one of the few American artists at the time who was not afraid to show a decaying body or blur the line between beauty and ugliness.

As his art matured, the artist's style could shift from a stylized realism one moment to modernistic abstraction the next—from high art to popular art. How amazed readers must have been seeing Coye consolidate these disparate elements into a personal bravado style. His heightened sensitivity to a vanishing 19th Century folk view and gothic mood helped him to create unsettling pictures of a region of New York State he believed haunted with bizarre spirits.

While reading stories for *Sleep No More* in the summer of 1944, Coye visited the Rockefeller Center offices of the pulp magazine *Weird Tales* and found himself making some drawings for quick money. At their pinnacle in the late 1930s, pulps were selling millions of copies a month. Still, most educated

Scratchboard illustration for "Black Dog," 1947



TO ACCOMPLISH THE EVIL DESIGNS OF THEIR MASTER, THE DEVIL, IT WAS ESSENTIAL THAT WIZARDS MINGLE WITH PEOPLE. THUS WE FIND THEM IN THE ROLE OF MEDICINE MEN. THEY JOURNEYED OVER THE COUNTRY-SIDE LADEN WITH THE TRAPS OF THEIR TRADE - A KNAPSACK HUNG ON THEIR BACK & A POUCH AT THEIR SIDE. HEREIN THEY CARRIED CHARMS, HEX-SIGNS & HERBS & NOT INFREQUENTLY, NEEDLES, THREAD, PRETTYS & SUNDRY OTHER NOTIONS TO TEMPT THE PUBLIC. IN SPITE OF THEIR DEBASED CHARACTER WIZARDS HELD A CERTAIN CHARM ABOUT THEIR PERSONALITY WHICH LET THEM INTO THE CONFIDENCE OF THE PEOPLE THEY SET OUT TO BEWITCH.

Scratchboard illustration for "Medicine Men," *Weird Tales*, March 1949

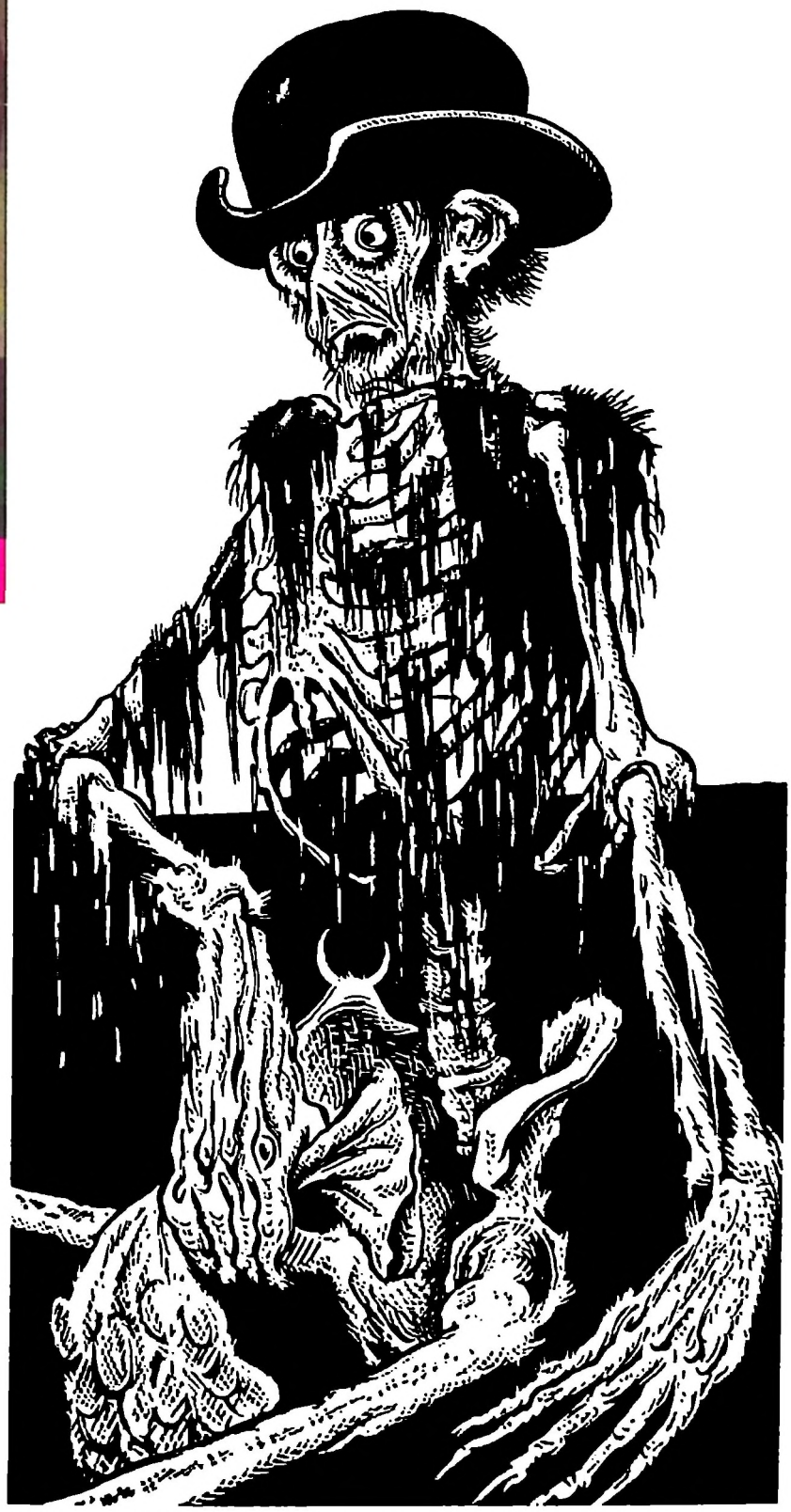
"THE MAN IN CRESCENT TERRACE" by SEABURY QUINN
MARCH
Weird Tales
15¢
A novelette of ominous omens and double-evil . . . . .
"TWICE CURSED" by Manly Wade Wellman

***Weird Tales*, March 1948**

people were reluctant to be caught with one in their possession. To these people pulps were trash—trashy art and trashy writing for the masses. Coye did not make this sort of distinction and once wrote "I'd rather have my stuff in a pulp magazine where people can see it than in a museum where they don't."

Fantasy artist John Mayer said of Coye: "[He was] one of the last surviving *Weird Tales* artists, and possibly the artist who... produced that magazine's strangest and most disturbing images. His work had a primitive, almost tribal look, but the tribe would have been one whose ancestry was tainted by unholy liaisons with beings not entirely human."

By this time all of Coye's illustrations were done on scratchboard. He had discovered the medium in the early 1930s and liked its woodcut characteristics, and chose to use it exclusively for the rest of his life. The artist's method began with a preliminary sketch in pencil to establish outline and design. He then transferred the drawing to Ross #2 white scratchboard (a heavy paper stock with a cauky white clay coating) by scrubbing the back of the drawing with the broad side of a square stick of charcoal. He would place the preparatory sketch on top of the scratchboard, and then carefully retrace the drawing with a hard lead pencil, leaving a thin line carbon copy.



Scratchboard illustration for "The Black Ferris," *Weird Tales*, May 1948

Scratchboard illustration for "A Night with Hecate," *Fantastic Stories of Imagination*, October 1963

Then using Winsor & Newton #00 and #0 series 7 brushes and Pelican Ink (which he always preferred to Higgins), he drew on the scratchboard, finishing up by scraping white lines into the board's blackened surface using engravers' tools, knives, pins, rags, pieces of wood, fingernails, and any odd pronged tool to create varied textural effects. In this way he was able to get hair-thin line details that would sometimes plug up on the cheap wartime paper used for the Derleth books.

At this time Coye was creating horror art while studying medical anatomy, and his studio was a gothic chamber filled with skeletons, dead animals, live rats, and human body parts from a medical college—all models for his intense art. He became a popular and prolific *Weird Tales* artist, appearing in many issues from 1945 to 1952—sometimes four and five times in a single issue. He also created a running department: "Weirdisms." Many of his illustrations in *Weird Tales* managed to mix the macabre with humor, as Coye also did in his life. There is a story that, after a hard day of doing medical illustrations, Coye walked into a bar carrying a decapitated head in a jar under his arm, placing it on the counter and buying his guillotined "friend" a drink.

John Vetter also prodded him to contact Arkham House, Derleth's publishing concern (specializing in horror and fantasy fiction), with the aim of doing dust jacket art. Coye wrote Derleth early in 1962: "After *Weird Tales* went out I did very little work in the horror field, but John Vetter has been after me lately and has tried to line up work, and consequently got my enthusiasm raised to a high pitch." Derleth responded

Weird Isms
Lee Brown Coye
IN ENGLAND, DURING THE REIGN OF KING JAMES THE FIRST, THE PRACTICE OF WITCHCRAFT & ITS VARIOUS MODES & CEREMONIES WAS DECLARED FELONY WITHOUT BENEFIT OF CLERGY. HENCE THERE AROSE A PROFESSION AS CRUEL & SADISTIC AS EVER HAD BEEN KNOWN TO MANTHAT OF THE WITCH-FINDER. THESE OBNOXIOUS SPECIMANS OF HUMANITY WENT FROM PLACE TO PLACE WHEREVER OCCASION DEMANDED - ROUNDING UP ACCUSED WITCHES & WIZARDS & UNDER UNBELIEVABLE TORTURES OBTAINED CONFESSIONS. FOR THESE CONFESSIONS THE WITCH-FINDER WAS HIGHLY REWARDED & ESTEEMED.

Scratchboard Illustration for "Witch-finder," *Weird Tales*, November 1949

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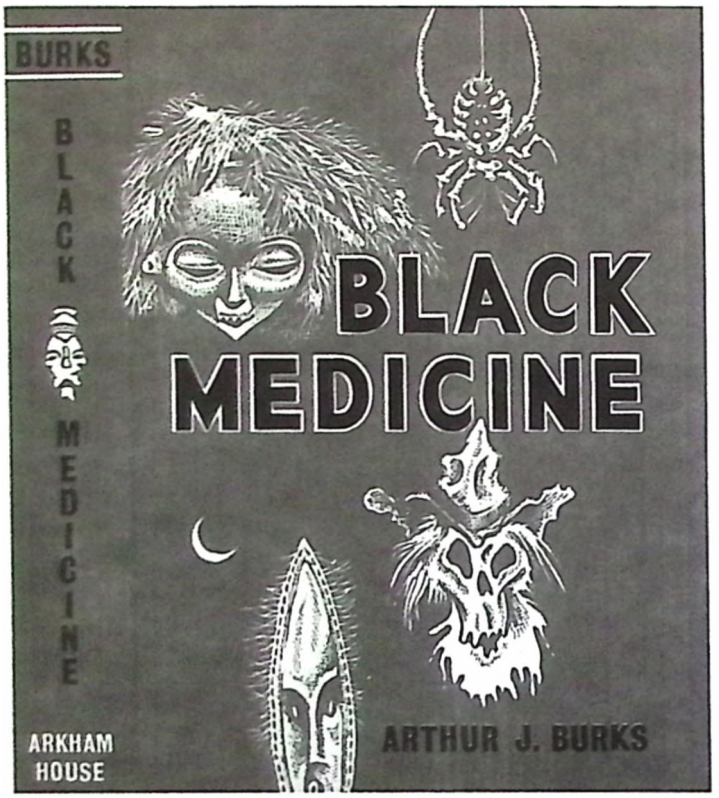
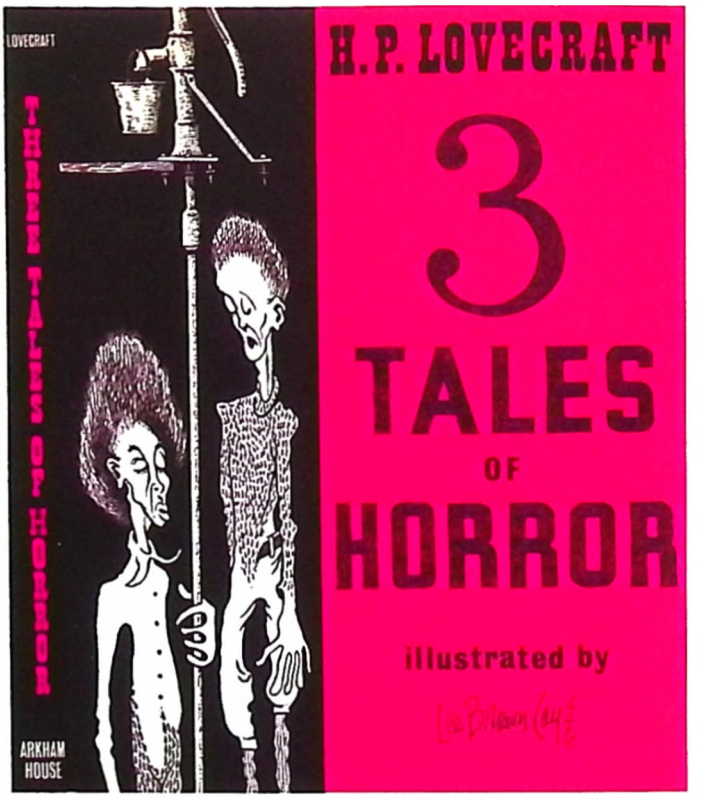


Black Medicine, 1966



3 Tales of Horror, 1967

that there was little money in the small press field, but Lee replied that the work would be a "labor of love." Coye designed book covers for Arkham House, mainly works by noted horror author H. P. Lovecraft (the catalyst for Arkham House's existence). Coye's second relationship with Derleth culminated in his illustrated masterpiece, Lovecraft's *3 Tales of Horror*. Executed over the span of four years, the drawings for the book gave off a visceral menace (absent from the tidy work of draftsmen like Hannes Bok and Virgil Finlay, *Weird Tales* compatriots who shared a similar taste for Stygian fantasy).

By 1972, with the death of his friend Derleth and his own bad health, Lee's sense of futility grew: "...being a failure is not easy—might better have taken the old man's advice years ago and amounted to something—for example, working for Corona Typewriter Co. all my life." To Coye, though, the worst that an artistic life had to offer was still heaven compared to the monotony of a day-to-day office job. When he died in 1981, after suffering a stroke that partially paralyzed him and kept him in nursing homes and hospitals for the last years of his life, he left behind a body of work that jibed with the morbidity of the 20th Century.

Black Medicine, 1966

The 1999 movie *The Blair Witch Project* mirrored a true-life incident that occurred to Coye as a young man when he discovered a strange, isolated farmhouse in the backwoods of upstate New York. The house was surrounded by bizarre constructs of lashed-together sticks. This unexplained display seemed to allude to some preternatural mystery, and stayed with Coye the rest of his days. With his second go at fantasy illustrating in the 1960s, sticks, latticed together or flying through the air, became a recurring motif (to go along with the crescent moon he had used since childhood as a branding icon). The incident at the stick house was remolded by horror writer Karl Wagner into an award-winning story, "Sticks," which may have influenced the makers of *Blair Witch*.

A special warmth for Coye, who was seen as part of the pantheon of pulp illustrators that included Hannes Bok and Virgil Finlay, continues to exist among weird fiction and pulp fans. While Bok and Finlay, since the demise of the original *Weird Tales* in 1955, have elicited many books and art collections of their work, Coye has long stayed in an art fog, which is all the

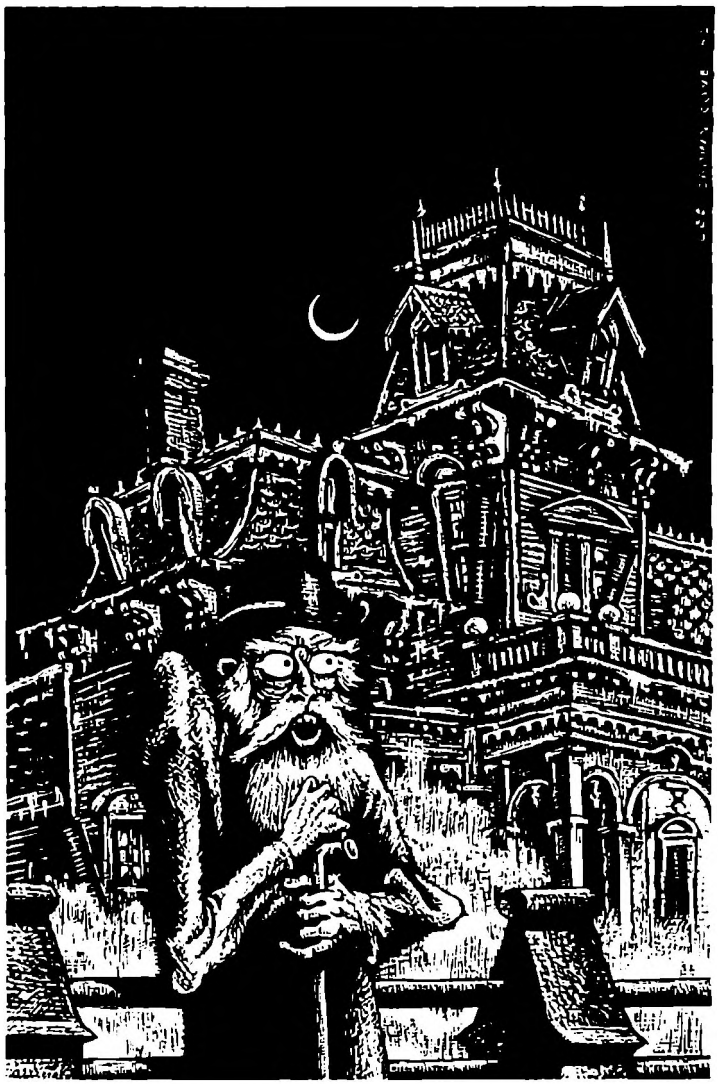
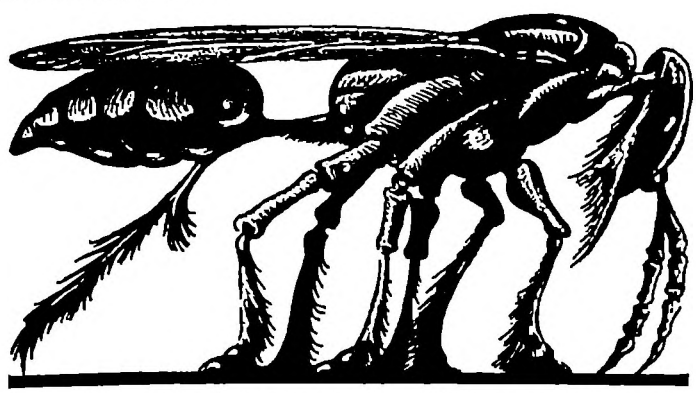


Illustration for "Heritage," *Fantastic Stories of Imagination*, December 1962

more striking considering the memorable distinctness and originality of his illustrations. It seems that Coye, at the very least a seminal pulp artist, has been harder to package, losing some momentum with the invisibility of his art, and, until recently, the concomitant lack of any real critical or biographical assessment.

—©2005 Luis Ortiz

Luis Ortiz is the author of *Arts Unknown; the Life & Art of Lee Brown Coye*, the first biography and art collection on the artist. It is available from booksellers or online at www.nonstop-press.com.



Scratchboard Illustration for "The Dunstable Horror," *Fantastic Stories of Imagination*, December 1964

New and Notable Books

CLASSIC BOOK JACKETS: THE DESIGN LEGACY OF GEORGE SALTER

BY THOMAS HANSEN
200 PAGES, FULL COLOR
$35.00 SOFTCOVER
PRINCETON ARCHITECTURAL PRESS, 2005

George Salter is a legendary figure in the field of book design. For more than forty years, his beautifully drawn and lettered covers served as elegant windows onto the works of such revered authors as Albert Camus, John Dos Passos, Jack London, and Thomas Mann. His hand rendered jackets combined typography, calligraphy, and his own subtle illustrations to masterful effect.

Salter's life and work bridged two continents and cultures, and spanned the severest political turmoil of the 20th century. Through a tumultuous life, nothing halted his tireless and brilliant design work. *Classic Book Jackets* tells Salter's story and describes the innovative design thinking he brought to his design students (including his designation of seven different jacket types that are still valid today). It includes more than 200 reproductions of his finest works, and a complete catalog of his jackets, designs, layouts, and lettering jobs for the book trade.

THE MISCHIEVOUS ART OF JIM FLORA

BY IRWIN CHUSID
180 PAGES, FULL COLOR
$28.95 SOFTCOVER
FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS, 2004

James (Jim) Flora concocted dozens of diabolic and hallucinatory album cover illustrations, many for Columbia and RCA Victor jazz artists, in the 1940s and '50s. His designs pulsed with angular hepcats bearing funnel-tapered noses and shark-fin chins, who fingered cockeyed pianos and honked lollipop-hued horns. Yet Flora's wondrous, childlike exuberance was subverted by a sinister tinge of the grotesque. He wreaked havoc with the laws of physics, conjuring up flying musicians, levitating instruments, and wobbly dimensional perspectives. He also took liberties with human anatomy, evoking bonded bodies, mutant appendages, ghoulish skin tints, and misshapen heads. He was not averse to pigmenting Benny Goodman and Gene Krupa like bedspread patterns.

The Mischievous Art of Jim Flora is the first comprehensive collection of album art by Flora (1914-1998), featuring over 225 images. The book contains most of his known covers, plus rarely seen 1940s and '50s illustrations from Columbia's *Coda* trade journal and some of Flora's magazine work from the period, as well as a biographical profile, interviews, photos, autobiographical reminiscences, and tributes from Alex Steinweiss, Gene Deitch, Shag, R.O. Blechman, Tim Biskup, and others who knew Jim and/or were influenced by him. *The Mischievous Art of Jim Flora* also presents the first-ever reprinting of his fabled Little Man Press illustrations (1939-1942).

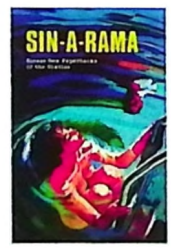
THE ART OF EARL OLIVER HURST

EDITED BY MITCH ITKOWITZ AND BRANDI BUDZIAK
INTRODUCTION BY HOWARD CHAYKIN
96 PAGES, FULL COLOR
$24.95 HARDCOVER
GRAPHIC COLLECTIBLES, 2005

This wonderful new book is the first in a series of volumes planned by Graphic Collectibles, to be focused on contemporary illustrators and illustration. Their first subject, Earl Oliver Hurst (189?–1958), was well known for his spirited and vibrant illustrations, and was responsible for the look of *Collier's* magazine throughout the 1930s and '40s. His color, line and design seem to burst with enthusiasm and energy, and every full page illustration in this attractive and well designed book leaps from the page.

In this first and only collection of his work, there are over 100 of his *Collier's* and *Home* magazine covers, Jantzen swimsuit and lingerie ads, colorful story illustrations, and more. Many of the illustrations are photographed directly from the original artwork, and every subtle nuance of color and line is faithfully reproduced.

I'm looking forward to the next book in this series!



SIN-A-RAMA

EDITED BY BRITTANY A. DALEY, HEDI EL KHOLTI, EARL KEMP, MIRIAM LINNA, ADAM PARFREY
CONTRIBUTIONS BY STEPHEN J. GERTZ, JAY A. GERTZMAN, JOHN GILMORE, MICHAEL HEMMINGSON, LYDIA LUNCH, LYNN MUNROE, ROBERT SILVERBERG
268 PAGES, FULL COLOR
$24.95 HARDCOVER
FERAL HOUSE, 2005

SIN-A-RAMA celebrates the forgotten world of erotic paperbacks from the 1960s, when sex acts were described with code words, writers used pseudonyms, and publishers hid behind mail drop addresses.

Sleaze paperbacks sold by the million throughout the decade. Their unorthodox content and inroads into the marketplace provoked new laws, FBI investigations, high-pitched court battles, and prison sentences for the crime of obscenity. Earl Kemp, the notorious Greenleaf Books editor, provides an insider's perspective, profiling famous and little-known coworkers. In "My Life as a Pornographer," science fiction legend Robert Silverberg divulges how he and other famous authors learned their craft and earned their keep pounding out softcore sin.

The bizarre glories of cover artists Robert Bonfils, Gene Bilbrew, Eric Stanton, Paul Rader, Ed Smith, Bill Ward, and Doug Weaver are seen throughout in lurid color.

SIN-A-RAMA is the first book-length exploration into a shadowy but revolutionary industry. A useful appendix reveals the actual names behind the pseudonyms, and catalogues both established and fly-by-night sleaze operators.

ARTS UNKNOWN: THE LIFE & ART OF LEE BROWN COYE

BY LUIS ORTIZ
176 PAGES, FULL COLOR
$39.95 HARDCOVER
NONSTOP PRESS, 2004

The brief excerpt on Lee Brown Coye's work earlier in this issue barely hints at the full range of his extensive talents. For a full examination of his fascinating career as a fine and commercial artist, you must turn to this wonderful new monograph by Luis Ortiz, the first biography on this uniquely macabre and eccentric artist.

Most know Coye as one of the famed artists connected to the legendary pulp magazine *Weird Tales* from 1945 to 1951. As this well-researched biography demonstrates, Coye's range was much more extensive. His metal and wood sculptures are particularly striking, and his works on scratchboard have a raw, primitive, and dark power. Though Coye never achieved commercial or financial success, there were bright spots in his career. The Metropolitan Museum of Art purchased one of his watercolors for their permanent collection, and he was a regular exhibitor at the Whitney Museum in New York.

Arts Unknown is profusely illustrated, with over 350 reproductions of cartoons, sculpture, illustrations and fine art, many unpublished until now.

GRAND MASTER OF ADVENTURE: THE DRAWINGS OF J. ALLEN ST. JOHN

COMPILED BY J. DAVID SPURLOCK
176 PAGES, BLACK AND WHITE
$34.95 HARDCOVER, $24.95 SOFTCOVER
VANGUARD, 2005

J. Allen St. John's art is synonymous with Edgar Rice Burroughs' heroic tales of courage and daring. The last time a book dedicated to St. John's art appeared was nearly thirty years ago, and while Russ Cochran's edition is a must-have for serious collectors, this more affordable volume should help reintroduce artists to one of the fathers of adventure illustration. St. John defined Tarzan, David Innes, John Carter, Carson Napier, and a whole menagerie of beasts that lurked in the dark African jungles, in the prehistoric wilds of Pellucidar, and across the otherworldly terrain of Mars and Venus.

While full of notations and quotes from original texts, what this volume is missing is a true biography on St. John. A strong introduction by Danton Burroughs or a Burroughs historian such as Russ Cochran or Robert Barrett would have gone a long way to place St. John into his proper historical context. Though never as esteemed as his contemporaries from the Brandywine School, St. John lent an air of aesthetic credibility that was lacking in the pulps at the time. As one looks through the hundreds of black & white illustrations it becomes evident just how influential he was on many of the fantasy artists that followed him. The careers of Frank Frazetta, Jeffrey Jones, Roy Krenkel, Alex Raymond, Hal Foster, Al Williamson, and many others are St. John's true legacy, and this book helps bring that to light once more. —*Brian M. Kane*

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EXHIBITIONS & EVENTS

PULPCON 34
July 7 through July 10, 2005
Dayton Convention Center, Dayton, Ohio

One of the largest and longest running conventions devoted exclusively to pulp magazines. The dealer's room has over 100 tables devoted to pulps and related materials. Guests of Honor at this year's convention include Martin H. Greenberg and Ed Hoch.

For more information, visit: www.pulpcon.org

Driving Through Futures Past
April 16 through September 11, 2005
The Petersen Automotive Museum

The Petersen Automotive Museum, one of the nation's largest and preeminent automotive museums, will present an exhibit featuring 75 pieces of concept car art, conceptual models and futuristic automobiles, illustrating some of the most ingenious automotive designs of all time. The exhibit is a comprehensive look at the hands-on process of automotive design before computers became an industry staple. Often referred to as "blue sky" concepts, these futuristic designs were created in advanced styling studios with the intention of promoting revolutionary ideas that reached well beyond the technologies of their day. Before computers became commonplace in automotive design, stylists created original sketches and renderings that often led to models of their designs and even full-sized automobiles. The exhibit features the visionary works of noted designers and illustrators from Harley Earl, Norman Bel Geddes and John Tjaarda to Bill Mitchell, Virgil Exner and Syd Mead.

For more information, call: 1-323-930-CARS or visit www.petersen.org.

Bob Peak
October 5 through October 29, 2005
The Society of Illustrators, New York

For 30 years Bob Peak was one of the most prolific and highly visible illustrators of his day. His work for magazines, advertising assignments, and the film industry (posters for *Camelot, My Fair Lady, Rollerball, Star Trek* and *Apocalypse Now*) demonstrate Peak's flair for the bold and the dramatic. Numerous examples of his original paintings are presented in this wide-ranged exhibition.

For more information, call: 1-212-838-2560

KONG: King of Skull Island
May 18, 2005 through July 1, 2005
The Society of Illustrators, New York

50 black and white and color illustrations from artist Joe DeVito's new book, *Kong: King of Skull Island*, are presented in this exhibition.

For more information, call: 1-212-838-2560

Building Books: The Art of David Macauley
Through May 30, 2005
The Norman Rockwell Museum at Stockbridge

Author and artist David Macaulay has demystified the workings and origins of everything from simple gadgets to elaborate architectural structures. A favorite with readers of all ages, this Caldecott Medal-winning artist is the subject of this exciting exhibition that takes an in-depth look at Macaulay's artistic process and extensive body of work, including *The Way Things Work, Castle, Cathedral, City, Mill, Ship*, and *Mosque.*

For more information, call: 1-413-298-4100

Over and Under: Reworked and Reused Paintings by N.C. Wyeth
February 26 to May 8, 2005
The Brandywine River Museum

Through a combination of paintings, photo enlargements, archival material, and text panels, this exhibition explores changes made to published works of art by the artist and by other hands. Several canvases included in the exhibition bear little or no resemblance to the original images conceived by the artist.

For more information, call: 610-388-2700 or visit the museum's web site at www.brandywinemuseum.org.

Please send event listings to: Dan@illo.us

In The Next Issue...

JOHN W. SCOTT

A. LESLIE ROSS

ARTISTS OF FILM FUN

The Art of John W. Scott by David Saunders
The Art of A. Leslie Ross by Carolyn Ross
The Artists of Film Fun Magazine by Jack Raglin
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GIL ELVGREN
(1914-1980)
"Skirting The Issue"
Oil on Canvas, 30 x 24
Signed, Lower Left
Published 1969 by Brown & Bigelow. Calendar print, deck of playing cards, note pad, ink blotter, and match-book cover. Reproduced page 145, figure 344. Gil Elvgren–All His Glamorous American Pin-Ups by Charles G. Martignette and Louis K. Meisel, Taschen, 1999.

ALBERTO VARGAS (1896-1983)
"Hollywood Dream Girl"
Watercolor & Airbrush on Board, 20 x 30
Signed 'Varga' Lower Right, Circa 1945-1955
Transitional Esquire - Playboy era period. Calendar, magazine cover, & centerfold feature subject.

HADDON H. SUNDBLOM
(1899-1976)
"The Pause That Refreshes"
Oil on Canvas, 60 x 50
Signed, Lower Left
Circa 1950-1960
Calendar art, centerfold, advertising specialty subject.

HAROLD W. McCAULEY
(1913-1983)
"The Alien & Miss America"
Oil on Canvas, 30 x 21
Signed, Lower Right
Published front cover Amazing Stories pulp magazine August, 1942.

GEORGE PETTY (1894-1975)
"All American Beauty"
Watercolor & Airbrush on Board, 10 x 22
Signed, Upper Left
Published by True magazine (Fawcett) as a unique 3-page centerfold in December, 1946.

MEL RAMOS
"Sheena–Queen of the Jungle"
Oil on Canvas, 30 x 26.5
Circa 1963.
Exhibited worldwide.
Reproduced in: The Girls of Mel Ramos, Playboy Press, 1975, pg. 49, Fig #63-4, Mel Ramos–Pop Art Images, Essay by Robert Rosenblum, Taschen, 1994, pg. 39; Mel Ramos Pop Art Fantasies–The Complete Paintings by Donald Kuspit & Louis K. Meisel, Watson-Guptill, 2004, pg 54.

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MEL RAMOS
"Giant Panda"
Oil on Canvas, 52.5 x 60
Circa 1970. Exhibited worldwide.
Reproduced in: The Girls of Mel Ramos, Playboy Press, 1975, pg. 137, Fig. #70; Mel Ramos–Pop Art Images, Essay by Robert Rosenblum, Taschen, 1994, pg. 69; Mel Ramos Pop Art Fantasies–The Complete Paintings by Donald Kuspit & Louis K. Meisel, Watson-Guptill, 2004, Back Outside Cover, and pg. 139

PAUL STAHR (1883-1953)
"The Pirate of Wall Street"
Oil on Canvas, 24 x 22
Signed, Lower Right
Published front cover Argosy pulp magazine, May 16, 1931

GEORGE ROZEN
(1895-1974)
"The Shadow Knows!"
Oil on Canvas, 22.5 x 21.25
Signed, Lower Left
Front cover of The Shadow pulp magazine published March, 1929 by Street & Smith, N.Y.

CHARLES G. MARTIGNETTE

P.O. BOX 293, Hallandale Beach, Florida, 33008 USA Telephone: (954) 454-3474

Author of *The Great American Pin-Up* published worldwide by Benedikt Taschen Verlag, October 1996. ISBN 3-8228-8497-9
Author of *Gil Elvgren - All His Glamorous American Pin-Ups* published by Benedikt Taschen Verlag, December 1999. ISBN 3-8228-6611-3
Author of *Pin-Up/The Edward Runci Collection* published worldwide by Collector's Press, Portland, Oregon, January 1997. ISBN 1-888054-15-8

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